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ARIFURETA SHOKUGYOU DE SEKAISAIKYOU
世界最強
OVERLAP

Arifureta Shokugyou de Sekai Saikyou

Volume 10

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Chapter 91 - Mother and Daughter's Reunion

"Hic, sob, hic."

A sobbing sound of a young girl resounding nearby the pier that had turned into wreckage. The onlookers and soldiers were crowding there, but there was not even a clamor, and the place was strangely quiet.

It was because of the should be kidnapped girl of Sea-dweller tribe who flew down from the sky, the human boy who jumped into the sky and caught her, and there was the black dragon with a girl riding on its back in the sky. However, the biggest reason was how the boy greatly scolded the girl from Sea-dweller tribe. Well, actually, it was how the young girl called the boy who scolded her.

"Sob, Papa, sorry…"

"Promise me you won't do anything that dangerous again, okay?"

"Un, Myuu will."

"Okay, that's good. Come here."

"Papaa～!"

The figures of Hajime, who was on one knee as he scolded the young child, and Myuu, who obediently reflected as she scolded by him though she cried then and jumped into Hajime's chest when she was forgiven… were as normal as that of a father and his child. It was also shown by how Myuu repeatedly called him "Papa."

The situation where the should've been kidnapped child of Sea-dweller tribe "adoring" a human boy enough to treat him as her father, and how Hajime treated Myuu as his own daughter made everyone dumbfounded, not

understanding what had happened. Their minds were asking the same thing. Which was, “How did it come to this?”

Hajime lifted Myuu with his arm and patted her back to calm her, and finally, the surrounding people returned to their senses and began to cause a great commotion.

As he leered at the clamoring, perplexed people, Hajime patted Myuu’s back and someone hugged him from behind… when he looked over his shoulder, there was Kaori’s figure whose head was on his shoulder, slightly trembling.

“I’m glad… I am really glad～, hic, hic.”

This time, Kaori had begun to cry. Even though she acted firm, inside, she was worried Hajime might be dead. She believed in Hajime’s survival, but there was no way she didn’t feel worried about him. That added to how he went missing for the second time shortly after they finally met again, enduring it was impossible for her

“I am sorry to make you worry. But as you can see, I am full of life here. That’s why, please don’t cry… if Kaori cry… I will be imensely troubled.”

“Uh, hic, th-then, let me stay like this for a little more…”

Troubled, Hajime patted Kaori’s head whose hands were wrapped around his arm. However, maybe because she couldn’t stop crying, Kaori buried her face more and more into Hajime’s shoulder. Both of her hands were now tightly embracing around Hajime’s stomach from behind.

“Oi, you, explain what are yo-gah!?”

“Muh? Sorry.”

The above was the commander-like person who was dripping wet due to being blown away into the seas as the consequence of Hajime’s jump. He didn’t read the mood and tried to question Hajime. However, he was

knocked by Tio (deactivated her Dragonform when she landed) who was running in short steps towards Hajime, thus the man once again fell into the sea.

Not minding the man that much, Tio came beside Hajime, held his head and pressed it into her cleavage.

“What the—!? Oi, Tio.”

“This one believes, thou know? This one believes… even so, Master… too much time hath passed until this reunion.”

When Hajime quietly looked at Tio’s face from her cleavage, her expression was one of ascerting her important one inside her arms with tears accumulated on the edges of her eyes. This time, Hajime felt it couldn’t be helped and let her do as she pleases because he had relied on her to do something unreasonable.

While that happened, Myuu said, “Myuu will hug Papa too～,” and she clung to Hajime’s nape. Shia, who was beside Yue, who was beside Hajime, began to hug his free arm.

The surrounding gazes couldn’t even see Hajime, as his whole body was covered by a beautiful little girl, beautiful girls, and a beautiful woman. The surrounding gazes were gradually changing from one of perplexion to one of looking at them warmly. Even the agitated vigilante corps and soldiers had lowered their arms, dumbfounded.

“You people… not only once, but twice… I will arrest you for obstructing the Kingdom’s soldiers’ work.”

Once again crawled up onto the pier, the commander-like person was angrily glaring at Hajime’s party. With weapon in hand, he seemed to be ready to attack at any moment. Though Hajime couldn’t be thought of as the kidnapper from how the kidnapped Myuu was

abnormally too attached him, there were too many unknown things about him, so of course the man wanted to question him.

Ever Hajime since the beginning had wanted to explain that he was entrusted by the head of Fhu-ren's guild branch, Ilwa, to escort Myuu. However, he was troubled as he had nothing to prove that, but now it was at hand.

With "Treasure Box" returned by Tio, Hajime took out his status plate and the request form from Ilwa, then he presented them to the commander.

"… Let me see… a "Gold" rank!? Moreover, a direct request from the head of Fhuren's branch!?"

Other than the request form, there was also the letter from Ilwa where the details were written. It was addressed to the Elisen's mayor and the top brass of the soldiers who resided in this town, the man before the party. After reading the letter intently, the commander spated a big sigh and after he hesitated a little, he gave up as he drooped his shoulder then saluted.

"… The request has been completed. Nagumo-dono."

"It is good that all doubts have been cleared. You must have things that you want to ask, but we are in a hurry. So I want you to not ask anything because… I want to let this child meet her mother right now. It's okay, right?"

"Of course it is. However, as a soldier of this Kingdom… I can't overlook about the dragon, you jumping, and the ship-like thing from before."

Radically changing from the previous oppressive manner, the commander's attitude became one which paid Hajime with respect. Even so, he appealed with his strong gaze to Hajime that it was impossible to overlook those.

"About that, can we just talk about it in another time? I am going to stay in this Elisen for a while, after all. I also

think there's no need to report about it to the kingdom because they probably already know about it…"

"Mm, I see. Anyway, it's good as long as we can have a chance to talk. Now please return that child to her mother… does she know of her mother's condition?"

"No, she doesn't. But it's okay. After all, we have the best medicine and healer here."

"I see. Then let me question you once things are settled."

The commander lastly introduced himself as Saluz, then he went to control the crowd by dispersing the onlookers. A dutiful person.

The people who know Myuu seemed to want to call out to her, but Hajime used his gaze to stop them because much time would pass before she returns to her mother if they did that.

"Papa, Papa. We are returning to home. Mama is waiting! Myuu wants to meet Mama."

"Of course… so let's hurry and meet her."

Pulling Hajime's hand, Myuu urged on with "Hurry, hurry!" It had been around two months since the last time she returned to her house and mother. So it couldn't be helped. Though she was usually laughing as she was taken care of by Hajime's party on their way, at night when the time to sleep came, she wanted to be spoiled because she indeed missed her mother.

On their way to Myuu's house, with Myuu as their guide, Kaori came close to him and asked him with a small, uneased voice.

"Hajime-kun. About what the soldier from before said…"

"Well, it doesn't seem to be life threatening. It's just that her wound is rather severe and it's also the physiological one… well there's no need to worry about the latter with Myuu being here. So please check her injury."

“Un. Leave it to me.”

While having that kind of conversation, they heard a commotion from the road ahead. It was the voice of a young woman and several voices of men and women.

“Lemia, calm down! It’s impossible with the condition of your legs!”

“That’s right, Lemia-chan. Myuu-chan will surely come back!”

“I don’t want to! Didn’t you say Myuu have come back!? Then, I must go to see her! I need to welcome her!”

Apparently, the woman tried to get out of the house, and she was stopped by several men and women. It was likely because an acquaintance had told Myuu’s mother of her return.

With the resounding of the frantic voice of the woman called Lemia, Myuu’s face bloomed and shone. Then, as loud as she could, she called out to the woman in her mid twenties, who had collapsed at the entrance door, while running.

“Mama～～!!”

“—!? Myuu!? Myuu!”

Running with all her might and with an expression full of smile Myuu jumped into the bosom of the woman — her mother, Lemia, who tried to steady her legs before the front door.

Seeing the figures of a mother closely and tightly embracing her daughter, expressing she didn’t want to be separated again from her child made the surrounding people look at them warmly.

For so many, many times Lemia repeatedly said, “I am sorry,” to Myuu. It was either because she had lost sight of Myuu or her incapability to come looking for her or may both.

Tears fell as Lemia both feel relieved from her daughter's safety and also the grief from being incapable of protecting hear. Looking at Lemia with anxious eyes, Myuu gently patted her mother's head.

"It's okay. Mama, Myuu is here. So there's nothing to worry."

"Myuu…"

Never did she thought she would be comforted by her four year old daughter, so Lemia's teary eyes unconsciously wide opened and she watched Myuu.

Myuu was also looking straight at Lemia and there's indeed worry about Lemia lodged inside her eyes. Myuu was a mama's girl and couldn't stand being alone before she was kidnapped, and although she also had painful times herself, she was more brokenhearted about her mother than herself in this reunion.

Surprised by that, Lemia was unconsciously watching Myuu in seriousness which made Myuu smiled, and this time she was the one who hugged Lemia tightly. Lemia wasn't that badly injured both in body and mind, but she was suffering from the sleepless night, overly worrying about Myuu, but it seemed her daughter had returned all grown up more than before.

This fact made Lemia inadvertently raised a wry smile. With her shoulders relaxed and her tears stopped, Lemia was looking at her daughter with eyes filled with love.

Myuu and Lemia once again hugged each other, but suddenly, Myuu raised a scream-like voice.

"Mama! Your legs! What happened!? Are you injured!? Is it hurt!?"

Apparently, Myuu noticed the state of Lemia's legs from over Lemia's shoulder. Both of her feet peeking from Lemia's long skirt were bandaged all over, they were in a

miserable state.

This was the thing Saluz talked about, and it was what Hajime's party heard from the young man on their way to Elisen. The thing that made the Sea-dweller tribe agitated was not only was Myuu kidnapped, but also how her mother was seriously injured that it became impossible for her to walk.

Though Myuu said she was kidnapped when she was separated from Lemia, the Sea-dweller tribe wouldn't be able to say it was a kidnapping unless there's an eyewitness. They were able to declare so because it seemed Lemia had actually encountered the kidnappers.

Lemia had discovered suspicious men erasing their footprints in the sand near the coast when she was looking for Myuu when she got separated from her. Though she felt a bad premonition, she approached the men to ask whether they know her daughter… the men's faces were expressing "Oh shit" and began to chant all of a sudden.

Convinced the men had a part on Myuu's disappearance, Lemia tried to somehow get Myuu back, running along the footprints.

However, one of the men fought back by firing flame bullets. Fortunately, she avoided being hit on her upper body but her legs were hit instead, then she was blown into the sea by the impact. Lemia lost her consciousness from both the pain and impact. When she woke up, she was being helped by the people from vigilante corps who went looking for her because she have not returned.

Her life was saved, but as the time passed, Lemia still couldn't feel her legs, thus she became unable to walk nor to swim. Naturally, Lemia tried to search for her daughter, but she couldn't due to her legs. In the end, she could do nothing but to leave it to the vigilante corps and

the Kingdom.

Lemia was in a state where she couldn't even stand properly now.

Lemia smiled to try not to make her daughter worry more than this, so she tried telling Myuu, "It's okay." However, faster than her, Myuu asked for help from her "Papa" whom she depended on the most in this world.

"Papaa! Please help Mama! Mama's legs are injured!"

"Eh!? M-Myuu? Just now…"

"Papa! Hurryy!"

"Ara? Arara? You said Papa? Myuu, who is this Papa?"

Confused, lot of "?"s floated above Lemia's head. The surrounding people were also clamoring. A lot of absurd remarks were flying from here and there such as:

"Lemia… has remarried? No… NO WAY."

"Finally, Lemia-chan's spring has arrived again! Congratulation!"

"It's lie, right? Someone, please tell me it is a lie… My Lemia-san…"

"Papa… Myuu said Papa!? Isn't it me!?"

"I am sure it is someone with stage name like Ku***ngpapa, yup, it must be it."

"Oi, time for an emergency conference! All members of "Watching Lemia-san and Myuu-chan warmly" gather now! Storm is coming!"

Apparently, Lemia and Myuu, this mother and daughter were popular here. Lemia was still young, in the mid of her twenties. Although she was considerably emaciated now, she had a well-sculpted looks similar to Myuu's. It was easy to imagine how attention grabbing her beauty would be once she was recovered, so it was understandable for her to be popular.

With the commotion that kept growing, Hajime's expression cramped expressing, "I don't want to go there now." Though he thought these people would understand once he explained the details about how Myuu came to call Hajime papa, he was just a "substitute (though inwardly they didn't think so)" of her Papa, and he wasn't aiming to marry Lemia, but the current misunderstanding were growing at an uncontrollable pace.

However, Hajime thought it was a godsend. After all, Hajime and his party wouldn't be able to continue their journey unless they left Myuu to her mother. It will be a goodbye once his party conquered «Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin». Hajime thought Myuu had come close to Hajime's party because she was in a place away from her hometown and been forcibly separated from mother, so once she returned to her mother her desire to be by Hajime's party's side would surely weakened as time passed, though she would be saddened at first. The surrounding people were strongly concerned about Lemia and her daughter, so they would surely helped them.

"Papaa! Hurrry! Please help Mama!"

Myuu's gaze was firmly looking at where Hajime was, thus Lemia and the surrounding people noticed Hajime once they traced Myuu's gaze. Hajime gave up and walked to where the mother and daughter were.

"Papa, Mama is…"

"It's okay Myuu… I will surely heal her. So please don't make such a tearful look."

"Okay…"

Hajime rustled Myuu's hair who was looking at him with tearful expression, then he moved his gaze to Lemia. Lemia was watching Hajime, dumbfounded. While thinking it couldn't be helped for her to do that, Hajime

decided to carry her into the house to heal her because his appearance had made the commotion grow we more.

“I am sorry, but excuse me for a moment, okay?”

“Eh? —!? Arara?”

Hajime lifted Lemia in princess carry while looking like he didn’t feel her weight at all. Then, he carried Lemia into the house guided by Myuu. With Hajime carrying Lemia, screams and roars were raised behind them, which he ignored. Lemia herself could only blinking from being suddenly lifted and carried by Hajime.

Having entered the house, he found a sofa in the living room, so Hajime slowly lowered Lemia there. Following that, while watching the blinking Lemia who was sitting on the sofa before him, Hajime called out to Kaori.

“Kaori, how is she?”

“Let me look at her… Lemia-san, I will touch your foot. Please say if it hurts.”

“Y-Yes? Umm, what’s with this situation?”

When she thought her kidnapped daughter had suddenly returned, a man whom her daughter adored and called Papa appeared. Furthermore, unknown beautiful girls and a beautiful woman gathered in her house. Such a situation made Lemia eyebrows frowned, troubled.

While that happened, Kaori’s examination ended and she told Lamia that her damaged legs’ nerves would be able to be recovered with her healing magic.

“However, it will take some time. The damaged nerves were in delicate places, so I will need around three days for there not to have any side effects to occur. Also, I think it will be better for them to heal little by little. Although it will be inconvenient, please hang on until then because I will surely heal you.”

“Ara ara, maa maa. I had thought I wouldn’t be able to

walk anymore… how can I repay you…”

“Fufu, don’t worry about it. You are Myuu-chan’s mother after all.”

“Umm, come to think of it, what is everyone’s relation to Myuu… furthermore, umm… why did Myuu call that person “Papa”…”

While Kaori immediately begin to treat Lemia’s legs, Hajime’s party decided to explain Lemia the details about things. About how they met Myuu in Fhuren, the riot, and how did Hajime came to be called Papa. Having heard everything while being treated by Kaori, Lemia deeply bowed her head in place, then repeatedly thanked them in tears.

“Truly, how can repay you for this… It is thanks to you that I was able to reunite with my daughter. I will surely repay this kindness of yours even with my life. As long as it is something I can do, whatever it is…”

Although Hajime’s party told her to not mind it, Lemia couldn’t consent not to repay the benefactors of her daughter’s life. In the mean time, the treatment from Kaori ended for today. When they told Lemia they were looking for an inn, Lemia thought it was a godsend and asked them to just use her house.

“Please at least let me do this much. Fortunately, this house is big, so there’s room for everyone. Please don’t hold back and use this house while you are staying in Elisen. Besides, Myuu will be happy with this. Right, Myuu? You are happy that Hajime-san and the others stay in our house, right?”

“? Papa is going somewhere?”

Hearing Lemia’s words, Myuu who was resting her head on Lemia’s lap woke up, blinking, she was dumbfounded. Apparently, she seemed to think it was a natural thing for

Hajime to stay in her house. Her expression said she didn't understand why Lemia asked her that question.

"I thought of putting a little distance once she returned to her own mother…"

"Ara ara, ufufu. It isn't good for Papa to take a distance from her daughter, you know?"

"No, didn't I explained it before? We are…"

"I know that you will continue your travel sooner or later. However, that's why please keep being her "Papa" until that day comes. If you take a distance know, then it would be a sudden goodbye… right?"

"… Well, if you say so…"

"Ufufu, it is okay too for you to always be her "Papa", you know? After all, I have said "with my life" before…"

Saying so, "Ufufu &#9825", Lemia laughed with one hand on her slightly blushing cheek. Such a calming and beautiful smile would normally calmed anyone… but a blizzard generated around Hajime.

"Please don't joke like that… the atmosphere turned cold now…"

"Ara ara, how popular. However, it is almost five years since I lost my husband… Myuu also want a Papa, right?"

"Fue? Isn't Papa Papa?"

"Ufufu, she said it, so Papa?"

The blizzard became much more intense. Though he didn't know whether Lemia actually notice the cold atmosphere, her calm aura made her words neither be taken as a joke nor a serious one. "That's a good courage, you!," was what Yue and the girls' gazes said, which was easily warded off by Lemia with a smile along with, "Ara ara, ufufu." She might be an unexpectedly great person.

In the end, the party decided to stay in Lemia's house.

When time to allocate the rooms, Lemia said, “Shouldn’t the husband and wife be together?” which responded with silent reply from Yue and the girls. Then, Myuu said, “Myuu will sleep with Papa and Mama,” which turned the place into a chaos, but at least it calmed down for now.

The party were going to conquer the next Great Dungeon from tomorrow onwards, so they needed to resupply and mend the broken and lost fixtures while it was also necessary for them to train on the newly acquired Age of Gods magic. However, while thinking he couldn’t neglect his few remaining time with Myuu, Hajime dozed off on the bed.

* * *

Three days after that.

How strangely short distance between Lemia and Hajime made the bloodshot glares of envy from men of Sea-dweller tribe stabbed Hajime. The neighbourhood aunties were also gossiping about Hajime and Lemia. In addition, Yue and the girls’ approach became even more intense as they became ill-humored. Yue at night was also becoming more lovely. Even so, Hajime completed the party’s preparation and about to begin to search for «Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin».

When the time come for them to part, Myuu wore a truly lonely expression. She greatly pulled Hajime’s back hair, but he somehow managed shake her off on the pier and board the fixed submarine. Waving her hands, Myuu firmly shouted, “Papa, have a safe trip!” Following that, with an atmosphere that could neither be taken as a joking nor a serious one, Lemia waved her hand saying, “Have a safe trip, D-A-R-L-I-N-G &#9825.”

From the side, they could be seen as wife and daughter who were sending the husband off to work. Sharp glares

were coming from Yue and the girls behind him and the surrounding Sea-dweller tribe. It made Hajime slightly hesitant to return here after conquering the next dungeon.

Chapter 92 - Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin

Northwest, 300 kilometers away from【Sea Town, Elisen】.

It was the location of one of the Seven Great Dungeon, 【Meljeene Bottom Sea Ruin】, that the party once heard from Miledi Raisen.

However, the party didn't have much time to listen to Miledi at that time, so she only told them that the "moon" must be accompanied by "Guryuu-en's proof" without the detailed location.

And so, Hajime's party only advanced through the vast ocean in accordance to the direction and distance they were told. However, they didn't find anything when they searched the pointed location in the bottom of the sea during daytime. The party had thought they'd be able to find some kind of trace because it was a bottom sea ruin, but it seemed they were too naive.

The pointed location was rather shallow compared to the other place in circumference of 100 kilometers, so it must be the correct place… that was what Hajime thought.

Reluctantly, the party decided to stop the search and wait until night, when the moon has come out, as Miledi had told them. The current time was sunset. The sun was shining in red with half of itself hidden beyond the horizon, brightening the world for the last time today. The sky and sea were dyed in orange while a straight road was produced by the reflection of the sun on the sea from over the horizon.

A beautiful spectacle of nature no matter whichever world it was. Hajime was watching the setting sun on the deck of the moored submarine. Abruptly, he thought of

something unbelievable, which was whether it was possible to return to Japan if he advances on the road of light leading towards the sun. He smiled wryly as he was thinking about something.

“Did something happen?”

Noticing the change in Hajime, Kaori called out to him.

Because she was taking a shower inboard a while ago, her hair was damp. No, not only Kaori. Yue, Shia, and Tio had gone up to deck before he was aware of it. Everyone had taken the shower inside the sub that Hajime took pride in. Their flushed cheeks, the damp hair stuck on their cheeks, and nape, made their figures truly captivating. The water from the shower room was set to rain right from the ceiling, so it wasn’t a problem for the four of them to shower all at once.

Incidentally, the reason why Hajime was on the deck, looking at the sunset was because of the possibility of taken into the shower room if he was careless.

When the girls were about to take the shower, Tio invited Hajime which gained approval from Kaori, Shia, and of course, Yue. Then, the four cut off the escape routes of Hajime’s refusal. Hajime, who will not embrace any other woman except Yue, had clearly said he won’t have a naked skin ship with other woman.

However, the girls ignored Hajime as they smiled. Leering at Yue who was blushing while making a flirtatious smile, Kaori and Tio who were pinning Hajime from the sides, and while Shia tried to put Hajime unconscious using Doryukken from behind. Feeling the impending danger of his body, Hajime seriously ran away and went to the deck… but, isn’t it a shame for a man to deny the placed meal before him?

Hajime thought that was a foolish question and shook his head, then he replied to Kaori.

“I am just recalling a little about Japan. After all, the scene here isn’t that much different from there.”

“… I see. Yeah, it really is. It is just like the evening sun I have seen in the sea before… somehow it makes me feel nostalgic. Though not even half a year had passed, eh.”

“That’s because the everyday here is too eventful.”

Having seated beside Hajime, Kaori was agreeing Hajime’s words while looking at the distance. She must be recalling the days she went through in Japan.

Maybe because she felt the loneliness from the conversation of the two, Yue trotted her still flushing body towards Hajime and sat on his lap. She entrusted her back to Hajime’s chest even though she must be feeling hot. Then, she began to watch Hajime right under his face.

Her eyes were obviously expressing she wanted them to let her join their conversation. Yue was feeling lonely, and at the same time she wanted to hear about Hajime’s hometown. Hajime, while inwardly knocked out by Yue’s cuteness, stretched Kaori’s cheek, who was sitting beside him, to scold her because a Hanya had appeared.

With only that, her mood became better which made Hajime felt complicated. Hajime thought, ‘Why would she do this much for someone who won’t accept her feelings…’ Though he thought of that, he won’t say it out loud. After all, it would be rude to her feelings if he did.

While he was stretching Kaori’s cheek, and at this time, Shia drew closer to him from opposite Kaori with sparkling eyes. She was obviously signaling she wanted to be cared, too. With his empty other hand, he stroked Shia’s rabbit ear. “Ehehe~,” Shia made a relaxed smile.

His back was leaned to by Tio. She didn’t demand anything in particular, just quietly sitting back to back

against him. However, he understood Tio was relaxed, and she entrusted her weight to him. It was slightly unexpected, since Hajime's only thought was to throw her into the sea if she makes a perverted demand.

Then, maybe because she felt something from Hajime's aura, Tio's body shuddered and trembled for a moment while her breathing turned rough…

Hajime's party cuddled close to each other above the vast sea. It would take a while until night time came, and the moon will begin to shine. So to kill time, Hajime began to speak a little about his hometown.

Hajime's story fascinated Yue and the other two while Kaori was supplementing him with a radiant smile. Time passed swiftly as they enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere and the sun had completely gone down to the other side of the horizon, and the moon had began to shine in its place.

Thinking it was about the time, Hajime took out the pendant which was the proof of having conquered 【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】 from his breast pocket. The design of the pendant was of a woman hanging a lantern and there was a hole on the lantern, becoming hollow.

Even while staying at Elisen, Hajime had taken out the pendant and held it towards the moon, and also supplied it with magic power, but there was no change in particular.

'Just what should be done to the moon and pendant?' , was what he thought while tilting his head. For now, Hajime tried to hold the pendant towards the moon. The moon could be seen from hole of the lantern design.

He waited for a while, but there was no change. Hajime, not understanding what to do, sighed and began to try another method.

But at that time, change appeared in the pendant.

“Waah, the light is gathering in the lantern. It’s beautiful～.”

“It is… a mysterious sight. Even though the lantern part is actually hollow…”

Shia was admiring the sight and Kaori, with shining eyes, agreed with her.

Just as the two said, the lantern part was absorbing the moonlight and light began to accumulate inside it. In accordance to that, the hollow part was filled by the light. Also becoming interested in it, Yue and Tio watched the pendant Hajime held up.

“Even though I’ve also tried it last night…”

“Hmm, Master. It might be because it won’t do if it isn’t here, right?”

It might be just as Tio guessed. Before long, the lantern finished accumulating the light and the pendant was now clad in light. At the same time, a light shot straight from the lantern, pointing to a certain location on the sea’s surface.

“… What an exquisite production. Truly different from Miledi’s.”

“It is. It really is fantasy-like, even I’m rather impressed by it.”

“Guided by the moonlight,” it was such a romance-like thing which made not only Hajime, but also Yue and the rest raised voices of admiration. The impression gained by Shia, just like Hajime and Yue, was strong as someone who had entered Miledi’s 【Miledi Great Dungeon】.

The party didn’t know how long the light would be released from the pendant’s lantern, so the submarine immediately sailed, lead by the light.

The sea at night was dark. Or maybe it would be better to say that everything was black. And even though the surface of the was still bright because of the moonlight, they were lead into the waters and thus everything instantly turned dark. The light released by the submarine and the pendant was the only thing cutting through the dark sea.

The light, passing through the glass made from front crystal (a type of sturdy and transparent ore) in front of the submarine, was pointing at the bottom of the sea.

The location pointed was the rock wall zone of the bottom of the sea. Numerous distorted rock walls were joined to form a mountain range. It was a place the party had searched during the daytime but it resulted in nothing… but when the submarine approached the rock pointed by the pendant's light, a tremor began to generated along with a strong rumbling sound.

The sound and tremor was caused by the rock wall that began to move. One of the rock's part was split in two, opening to the right and left like a door. The dark road lead inside was as though it was inviting one to the netherworld.

"I see… so that's why we can't find it no matter how much we tried. How foolish of me to think we will be able to find it if we were lucky."

"… There's no helping it, but it was fun."

"Yue is right. Don't you think it was an amazing experience to sightsee the bottom of the sea of this different world?"

Hajime's shoulders drooped as he understood the search they did during daytime was in vain, but it seemed Yue and Kaori quite enjoyed it.

Hajime moved the submarine and the party entered the

crack. The pendant's lantern still had around half of its accumulated light, but it had stopped releasing the light. Only the submarine's light was shining inside the dark sea now.

"Umm~, this one had thought this since hearing about the bottom sea ruin, but wouldn't it be impossible for ordinary people to enter this labyrinth without this "submarine" thing?"

"… It's impossible unless one using a strong barrier."

"It will also be impossible if they can't control the air, light, and water current at the same time, eh."

"But, it is necessary to conquer 【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】 to come here, so I think people who are capable of conquering the Great Dungeon are able to enter.

"Maybe we are supposed to use Spatial magic."

Entering deeper on the underwater road, Hajime's party were considering other ways to conquer this dungeon without a submarine. They were impressed by the fantastic entrance, but indeed, once they thought about it normally, unless there were several top class magic users, it was impossible to enter the dungeon. A troublesome point similar to the other Great Dungeons.

With caution, Hajime's party watched the bottom sea through the front crystal.

And at that time,

FwwwOOOOooooosh~!!

"Uwoh!?"

"Nh!"

"Wawah!"

"Kyah!"

"What the—!?"

The side of the submarine suddenly received an impact and immediately, the submarine was thrown towards a direction. Just like the time they were thrown into the magma's swift current, the submarine was turned around and around, but the party had already came up with a countermeasure for it. Using the gravity stone installed at the bottom of the submarine to increase the weight, the party stabilized the it.

"Uh, I don't want to taste this twirling again～."

Shia's face paled as she recalled the time they got swept underground of【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】, and shook her head to stop recalling it.

"Didn't we recover immediately? I already said it'll be okay from now on. But more importantly, just where does this current led to…"

While smiling wryly at such a Shia, Hajime observed the outside through front crystal. The Green Light stone's light was circulating around the dark cave, letting him pictured the surrounding. From what he could see, the party seemed to have been swept by the current into a huge round cave.

While operating the submarine, Hajime's party advanced by following the current. After a while, the "Farsight stone" installed in the stern caught innumerable objects shining in reddish black.

"They seem to be approaching us… Well, they are most likely demonic beasts clad in reddish black magic power, huh."

"… Shall we?"

When Hajime muttered, Yue, who was sitting by his side, was gathering magic power in her hand, and said in gangster-like tone, but she still looked cute.

"No, let's use weapon here. I also want to confirm their

effectiveness.”

Hajime operated the gimmick on the back of the submarine. Then, numerous pet-bottle sized torpedoes that had dyed Ancadi’s Oasis in red, was launched. Hajime thoroughly painted them so they looked like smiling mischievously sharks.

Because they were inside the swift current, the torpedoes’ propulsion could only move them to a small degree, and it resulted with them scattering like sea mines.

The submarine advanced ahead ,and before long, the numerous demonic beasts clad in reddish black magic power with appearance of flying fish entered the cluster of torpedoes.

BOOoOOoooOOoom!!!

Grand explosions generated in succession from behind the submarine and a large amount of bubbles wrapped the group of flying fish-lookalike. Afterwards, the bodies of flying fish-lookalike were tore apart by the impact and the flesh and blood were scattered from inside the appearing bubbles, looking like seaweed thrown into a swift current.

“Yup, it has more power than before. The improvement is a success.”

“Uwaah～, Hajime-san. Just now, there was something with eyes of a fish being swept outside.”

“Shia, those art actually dead fishes.”

“Once again it makes me think the artifacts Hajime-kun made are a foul.”

From then on, Hajime’s party advanced while easily beating the flying fish-lookalike they frequently encountered.

They advanced without knowing how long it would be.

At that time they began to notice the sense of incompatibility of the unchanging scenery. Hajime's party arrived at a place where the surrounding walls had been randomly destroyed. When they looked carefully, torn heads of flying fish-lookalike were placed between the rock walls with their hollow eyes looking at the sea.

"… Hmm, isn't this the place we passed before?"

"… Seems so. Are we going in circles?"

Apparently, Hajime's party were going in circles in an annulus ring cave. They had thought the Great Dungeon was ahead of them so they advanced, but Hajime was doubtful that he had mistaken a road here, as if it was a normal bottom sea cave. Resultantly, the party now didn't advance according to the laid road, and carefully searched the surrounding for any clues.

As a result,

"Ah, Hajime-kun. There's one there too!"

"With this, it is the fifth place…"

The party discovered several place inside the cave that were carved with fifty centimeters long crest of Meljeene. The carved crest of Meljeene was of pentagram with lines connected to each five points and the center was carved with crescent moon-like design. It was similar to the five places in this annulus ring cave.

For a thorough examination, Hajime's party approached the crest they first discovered. Because they were exposed to the swift current, Hajime took care in controlling the submarine.

"Well, there are five places with pentagram, so if the remaining light inside the pendant is used…"

Muttering, Hajime took out the pendant he wore on his neck and held it before the front crystal. Then, the pendant reacted and light was released straight from the

lantern. Following that, the light touched the crest and the crest shone.

“It will be disastrous for people who come here using magic… if they didn’t notice this immediately, their magic power would be depleted.”

Just as Kaori said, this RPG-like method would be too cruel for people who somehow survived only by maintaining their magic. It might be because the objective was to make them reach their limit in a different sense than 【Guryuu-en Great Volcano】.

Afterwards, three more crest in their own location was poured with light from the lantern, and the party arrived before the last crest. The light collected inside the lantern decreased when it was released to light up the crest, and the remaining light had enough for only one more usage.

Hajime held up the pendant and poured the last crest with the light, finally, a way to advance from this annulus ring cave opened. With a rumbling sound, the wall of the cave split in two.

Not much happened as the party advanced into the interior, but the water was descending right to below. Then, the submarine was wrapped with floating feeling as it was falling down.

“Ohh?”

“Nh.”

“Hyah!?”

“Nuoh.”

“Hauu!”

Respectively the five of them raised different scream. Hajime was enduring the floating feeling between his groin. Then, the submarine hit the hard ground with a roaring sound. The severe impact was transmitted into the interior, and Kaori whose body wasn’t that strong

raised a groan.

“Kh… Kaori, are you okay?”

“Uhh, I-I’m okay. More importantly, here is?”

While frowning, Kaori looked at the outside through the front crystal, and unlike a while ago, the outside was not sea water but a cavity. Because there was no sign of demonic beast, Hajime’s party went outside.

Outside the submarine was a huge hemispherical space. When they looked above, there was a large hole, but they didn’t know what kind of principle caused the water’s surface to sway to and fro. Without any drop of water, it was swaying to and fro, and it was the place where Hajime’s party fallen to.

“Looks like here is the real thing. Rather than a bottom sea ruin, it is a cave though.”

“… It’s good that there isn’t water everywhere.”

Returning the submarine into “Treasure Box,” Hajime urged Yue and the others to advance into the passage they could be seen inside the cave… but he called out to Yue before the party moved.

“Yue.”

“Nn.”

With just that, Yue immediately created a barrier around them.

Momentarily, laser-like water current attacked them like meteors from above. The laser made of compressed water was similar to “Rupture” Yue used in 【Raisen Great Dungeon】. If one gets hit by it, a hole would be easily created in their body.

However, Yue’s barrier was extremely strong even if it was put cast in a hurry. As a proof, it easily blocked the incoming attack from above. Because Hajime promptly

perceived the rise in magic power and killing intent, Yue who promptly answered him, the surprise attack was no longer a surprising one. Naturally, the moment Hajime called out to Yue, Shia and Tio had guessed the attack and was undisturbed by it.

However, Kaori didn't react the same way as them.

"Kyaa!?"

The too sudden, and the intense attacks made her instinctively raised a scream. She immediately clung on Hajime who was beside her.

"I-I am sorry."

"No, don't mind it."

Sneaking a glance at Hajime whom she parted from, Kaori would usually blushing here, but Kaori's complexion didn't look good. She seem to be a little depressed from exposing her disgraceful behavior when she clinged onto Hajime.

Also, she was once again shocked by Yue's proficiency in magic.

When she was still with Kouki's party, Kaori also used defense magic to assist Suzu. She trained hard, and her activation speed was not inferior to a "Barrier Master" like Suzu. Even so, when compared it to Yue, her defensive magic was child's play.

She had felt "that" when Hajime's party rescued them from 【Orcus Great Dungeon】, she understood, but she pushed her "inferiority complex" into the bottom of her mind because only when she could do that would she be able to stay by Hajime's side. However, the question whether she would only be a burden crossed her mind again.

"Are you alright?"

"Eh? Ah, nothing. There's nothing wrong."

“… I see.”

Kaori immediately tried to deceive him by making a forced smile. Although Hajime slightly narrowed his eyes towards her action, he didn’t say anything.

His action made Kaori feel a little lonely, but relieved at the same time. Then, she noticed Yue, who continued to block the rain of dread, staring at her. Her eyes seem to see through Kaori’s heart, which made Kaori put strength in her eyes and stared back at Yue.

Kaori would not let her feelings be laughed at like that time. After all, if that happens, the pretty girl before her who received Hajime’s love would stop to recognize her as a threat.

That… was something she wouldn’t be able to endure.

Receiving Kaori’s powerful gaze, Yue smiled a little and once again looked above. At the same time, Tio fired her flame to burn the ceiling. With that, the culprit of the attack fell in a tatter.

It was a barnacle-like demonic beast. A lot of them were sticking on the ceiling, shooting “Rupture” from the hole above. A physiological disgust-inviting spectacle.

Maybe because it was still an underwater creature, it was weak to flames and was immediately burnt by Tio’s flame magic, “Spiral Flame.”

After defeating those barnacle-lookalike, Hajime’s party walked into the passage. They went lower than the previous room, and even the seawater reached their thighs.

“Ah～, it’s hard to walk…”

“… Should I get off?”

With splashing sound as they advance through the seawater, Hajime started to complain. And so, Yue, who was sitting on his shoulder, asked. Yue was carried by

Hajime because with her height, she would be soaked faster than anyone else.

Hajime returned a gaze saying there's no problem while he ignoring Kaori's and Shia's envying gaz. Then, he put his hand on Yue's thigh so she would not fall, firmly fixing her in place. Yue was also wrapping her hand around Hajime's neck.

Kaori and Shia were sending even more and more envying gazes, but they were now focusing on another problem; an attack from demonic beasts.

The appearing demonic beasts looked like shurikens. They moved in a straight line towards their target while rotating in high-speed, but sometimes they also curved on the fly. Hajime smoothly pulled Donner and unhesitatingly fired, shooting down everything in the air. Although some died with their bodies still intact, the dead demonic beasts which floated on the surface of water had a shape of a starfish.

In addition, having perceived sea snake-like demonic beasts swimming fast in the water below them, Yue skewered them using spear of ice.

"… Aren't they too weak?"

Except Kaori, all of the party members agreed with Hajime's mutter.

Enemies inside a Great Dungeon were theoretically strong individually and became troublesome if more than one appeared. However, the starfishes and sea snakes were similar to the demonic beasts who attacked them in the sea once they got out of the sea volcano, or at least that weak. Truly unbefitting of a Great Dungeon's demonic beast.

Excluding Kaori who didn't know much about Great Dungeon, everyone was tilting their heads, but their

answer would be shown inside the huge space on the other end of the passage.

“…The heck?”

As soon as Hajime’s party entered the space, translucent jelly-like body blocked the entrance to the passage.

“Let me do it! Uryaaah!!”

Immediately, Shia, who was at the rear, swung Doryukken to break the wall. However, the surface only scattered, but the jelly-like wall didn’t break. Following that, the scattered remains stuck on Shia’s breasts.

“Hyaa! What’s with this thing!?”

Shia raised a voice of confusion and shock. When Hajime’s party turned around, the clothing around Shia’s breasts was melting. The jelly thing wrapped around her clothing and undergarment, and Shia’s voluptuous twin hills began to become more and more exposed.

“Shia, don’t move!”

Immediately, Tio perfectly burnt the sprayed jelly-thingy. A little part of Shia’s breasts where the jelly was attached to was swollen red. It looked like the jelly blocking the entrance had a rather strong acidity.

“Kh! There’s more coming!”

Hajime warned, and right after they moved away from the wall of jelly, numerous tentacles attacked from above. They looked sharp like spears, but their appearance was similar to the jelly that was blocking the entrance.

“Honestly, the combination of Yue as defense and Tio as offence feels like a foul play.”

An impregnable defense and at the same time a one-sided offense. That’s why Hajime could do nothing but mutter so. Seeing it as a chance, Shia was slowly approaching

Hajime's side while empathizing her exposed cleavage. Truly sly, as she began to pleading with upward glance while blushing.

"Excuse me, Hajime-san. It's burnt, so can Hajime-san rub it with medicine?"

"… Sigh, don't you see our situation?"

"Well, I think it'll be okay because Yue-san and Tio-san are unbeatable… Also, if I don't do some appeal in this situation, I will be overshadowed by Kaori-san too…"

Shia said while approaching Hajime to show off the burn on her cleavage.

Then,

"Bring the holy ground and healing unto this place 'Heaven's Blessing.'"

Kaori healed Shia's injury while smiling nicely. "Ahh~, even though it was a chance to get my breasts touched!," Shia grieved while everyone was looked at her coldly.

"Hm? …Hajime, these jelly seems to melt magic, too."

While he was giving the grieving Shia a cold look, Yue said to him. When he looked at it, he could see parts of Yue's barrier melting.

"Mhm, this one thought so. This one felt it was strange that the previous flame lost its force. It seems it even melt the magic power inside the flame."

If what Tio said was right, then these jelly was capable of melting magic power. It was a strong and troublesome ability. Suitable for a Great Dungeon's demonic beast.

Though it must haven't heard what Hajime thought of it in his mind, finally, a figure of a demonic beast that was manipulating the jelly had appeared.

The thing appeared as it was permeating through the small cracks in the ceiling, halted in mid-air, and began

to reshape. A translucent humanoid with fin-like limbs, and its whole body carried innumerable specks sparkling in red with two feelers-like thing growing on its head. The figure that was swimming mid-air with its fin-like limbs was just like a Clione. Well, a ten meters tall Clione was nothing but a monster, after all.

Without any preliminary movement, tentacles were shot out from the Clione's huge body. At the same time, jelly was spraying from its head just like a shower.

"Yue, attack it, too! Leave the defense to me! "Divine Interruption"!"

Using the derived skill, "Delayed Activation", Kaori activated the "Divine Interruption" she chanted beforehand. Nodding at Kaori, Yue went to Tio, and together they fired flame towards the huge Clione. Shia also changed Doryukken to firing mode and shot it.

The Clione was hit by all of their attacks, and its body exploded and scattered in all directions. One hit kill! , Yue and the other two raised a satisfied expression, but Hajime let out a warning to them.

"Not yet! Its presence is still here. Kaori, maintain the barrier… What's with this, the demonic beast's presence is all over the room…"

Hajime's perception abilities caught the presence of the demonic beast all over the room. Moreover, everywhere his Magic Eye see was dyed in reddish black color, as if the demonic beast was the room itself. It was a situation he had never encountered before, so naturally Hajime's eyes sharpened.

Right after, as if to sense his anxiety, the Clione that was scattered in all directions was regenerated in no time. Moreover, on its belly were the starfish-lookalike and sea snakes they encountered and defeated. They melted while raising sizzling sound.

“Hmm, it seems the demonic beasts this one thought as weak were truly ordinary demonic beasts, and they seem to be this guy’s meal… Master. It doesn’t matter if it keeps regenerating. But where is its magic stone?”

“Now that Tio-san mentioned it, why can’t I see the magic stone although it is transparent?”

Agreeing to Tio’s assumption, Shia was now looking at Hajime, but Hajime had a troubled expression while he looked for the location of magic stone of the huge Clione.

“… Hajime?” When Yue called him, Hajime scratched his head and reported what he saw.

“… None. That guy doesn’t have magic stone.”

His words made everyone dumbfounded.

“H-Hajime-kun? For it to not have magic stone… Then, does it mean it isn’t a demonic beast?”

“I don’t know. However, if I must say, that jelly’s body, all of them are magic stone. My Magic Eye saw that guy’s whole body is dyed in reddish black color. Also, be careful since this whole room is also dyed in the same color. Or maybe we are already inside that guy’s stomach.”

The same time Hajime told them about the shocking fact, the huge Clione began to attack them again. This time, not only did the tentacles attack while the jelly rained down, but its feet entered the sea water and some parts of its body were fired like a torpedo.

Hajime took out a black, large rifle from the “Treasure Box.” The large rifle had a gas cylinder thing installed where the magazine should be loaded, and also an unbelievably large caliber.

That was natural. After all, it wasn’t a rifle…

FWOOOOSH!!

It was a flamethrower. The Flame ore in tar form made the flamethrower sprayed flame of 3,000 ˚C. It was not aimed at the huge Clione, and neither at the tentacles nor the sprayed jelly. It was aiming at the “wall” that was giving reddish black reaction. The Clione was left to Yue and the other two.

Maybe because the huge Clione had a mimetic ability, the wall seemed to be not out of ordinary, but the flame released by Hajime burnt it and peel it off from the wall just like a wallpaper. Hajime was slightly relieved the one on the wall was not another huge Clione.

However, the transparent jelly kept appearing from the cracks on the wall no matter how much he burnt it, and finally it even appeared from under his feet. His shoe soles generated sizzling sound.

The attack on the real body by Yue and the other two was also increasing in intensity, and even the huge Clione seem to have finally gotten serious as jelly sprung up from the entire wall with a tremendous momentum. Moreover, the water level had raised before the party were aware of it. At first, it was around the thigh level, but now it has risen to around the waist. As for Yue, her chest area was already soaked by the water.

Yue and the other two had defeated the huge Clione so many times, but the surrounding jelly immediately gathered, and the end of the fight was nowhere in sight.

It was a terrible situation if they didn’t find a way to defeat it, and they would die by drowning. While their fighting power was being reduced, they wouldn’t be able to keep besieging the huge Clione. Even if they cast barrier magic and entered the submarine, it would melt unless they find the way to defeat it.

As such, Hajime decided to withdraw. However, all of the passages had been blocked by the jelly. Hajime

frantically looked around. Then, he discovered a crack on the ground which generated a whirl.

“I will at least recover us from this situation. There’s also a place under the ground. Well, I don’t know where it is connected to, so brace yourselves!”

“Nh.”

“Yes～.”

“Understood.”

“Okay!”

Receiving everyone’s answer, Hajime, while turning the flamethrower around to burn the incoming jelly, used “Transmutation” towards the crack. The crack was forced to expand and gradually, a deep hole was opened.

While still underwater, Hajime took out a cylinder with length of 15 cm and diameter of 3 cm. In the middle was the mouthpiece part of a snorkel tube. It was small oxygen cylinder. It was created using the ore imbued with Spatial magic using Creation magic. Thus, the space inside where the oxygen was put into, expanded just like “Treasure Box.”

However, while he was making preparation in Elisen, Hajime had prioritized the broken and lost equipment. In addition, it was hard for him to use Spatial magic so the space created was much narrower compared to “Treasure Box.” Because of that, these small oxygen cylinder can only hold out for around 30 minutes.

Setting the time limitation in the corner of his mind, Hajime repeatedly “transmuted” the water, and before long, Hajime took out pile bunker from “Treasure Box” once there was no more reaction on the ground. After fixing the anchor under the water, it charged.

Screeech～!!!

Following that, he pulled the trigger to break the floor.

KABOooOOOOoom~!!!

Inside the water, a muffled thundering sound generated and spread with vibration.

In the next moment, water flowed into the penetrated hole with tremendous momentum. The seawater that had reached around the waist began to flow mightily all of a sudden, which resulted in Yue and the other three to be swept and thrown into the hole.

Inside the swift current, Hajime desperately braced against the current and took out a gigantic boulder and numerous incendiary grenades from “Treasure Box.” Then, he threw them at the same time he was swept into the space below alongside with Yue and the other three.

Behind him, muffled roaring sounds rang out. However, he was unable to confirm whether he was successful in gaining even a little time against the huge Clione’s pursuit.

Chapter 93 - Inferiority Complex

“Cough, cough, ugh.”

“Huff huff, are you okay, Kaori?”

“Y-Yeah, somehow… Everyone is…”

In front of Kaori, who was coughing from drinking a large amount of seawater, were Hajime, whose hand was coiled on her waist, and a pure-white sand beach. There was nothing else beside those around her, but she could densely see packed mangrove-like trees in the distance, and the surface of the waving sea high in the sky. The seawater was like a barrier, preventing any intruder. It was a vast space.

“Looks like we are getting separated… Well, I gave everyone a smaller version of “Treasure Box,” so they should be able to do something by themselves.”

“… Nn.”

Hajime lightly said after letting go of Kaori, and fixed his hair. However, Kaori’s mind seems to be somewhere else.

While watching Hajime stand up and began to change his clothing, Kaori recalled what happened a while ago.

Hajime’s party attempted a strategic retreat from the huge Clione.

The place they fell into was a gigantic, spherical space with tens of tunnels, where there were spouting seawater with tremendous force. Or maybe it could be said that they were flowing from there; a place with storm-like and messy current.

Swept by the swift current, Hajime’s party somehow managed to stick close together, but next the current mercilessly separated the party. Yue tried to control the

current with magic, but it didn't work well because the current was too random. Shia controlled the weight of Doryukken in cooperation with Tio; a fine play.

Hajime had actually wanted to take out the submarine and ride it, but it was impossible inside the swift current. Clenching his teeth, Hajime took out ultra-heavy, compression ore, and tried to use the weight to overcome the current just like Shia.

At that time, by luck, he saw Yue getting swept towards him, and Yue would meet up with Hajime thanks to the current. Shia and Tio had already disappeared into a tunnel somewhere, and their figures could no longer be seen inside the space.

Hajime tried to reach out to Yue so she wouldn't get separated from him, but Kaori's figure was being swept to the lower side had entered his view. The pained gaze of Kaori's met Hajime's. He previously reached out to Yue before him, but his and Kaori's gaze had indeed met.

There were two choices.

If he catches Yue, Kaori would be swept alone into a tunnel. The same thing would happen to Yue if he was to catch Kaori. The current Hajime could only choose one of them. Within that moment, it felt like eternity. Hajime exchanged gazes with Yue, and he made a decision.

Using the weight from the ultra heavy compressed ore he took out from "Treasure Box," Hajime rushed below, and then he caught Kaori. Kaori's eyes were wide in surprise, but the two were immediately exposed to an even stronger swift current. Together, the two were thrown into a tunnel.

While being swept away, Hajime activated "Vajra" to protect Kaori in his arms, enduring it even when he was thrown at a rock wall. Then, he was able to see light coming from above once the current weakened and went

up.

And there was the pure white sandy beach spreaded across the coastline.

“… Nee, Hajime-kun. Why… why did you save me?”

“Hah?”

Kaori questioned Hajime whose back was turned towards her. Hajime only tilted his head, thinking “what kind of question was that?”

“Why did you save me and not Yue?”

“Well, Kaori seemed to be dying and Yue can do something by herself. Yue’s eyes also told me to save Kaori.”

“… You really trust her, eh.”

“Isn’t that natural? We are partners, you know?”

“…”

The already depressed Kaori was even more depressed after hearing the answer. Suddenly, a shadow stretched over the downcast Kaori.

Puzzled, Kaori looked up and there was Hajime’s face very close to her own. His eyes and nose were right before her. A distance that would conclude in a kiss if he move even a little closer. Kaori felt as if she was sucked by Hajime’s eyes, and suddenly, her cheeks were pulled.

“Ift huwt! Waft au uing!” Kaori protested with teary eyes.

However, Hajime ignored Kaori’s protest and played with her soft cheeks without reserve for a while. After finally being released, Kaori looked up with a reproachful gaze while rubbing her red cheeks, but Hajime only snorted with “Hmph”.

“If you have time to be depressed, then it’s better to use and move. We’re inside a Great Dungeon, you know? Just until when will you stay wet like this? Or, are you trying

to gain my sympathy?”

Hajime’s sharp words made Kaori’s face instantly reddened. It was of shame. She noticed what he unexpressed said, isn’t this the wrong place for that?

“Th-There’s no such a thing! I was just daydreaming. I-I will change my clothes soon. Sorry.”

“…”

Kaori hurriedly stood up and began to take off her clothes after taking out substitute clothes from mini-“Treasure Box” (around the size of a house’s storage) that was given to her before the party left Elisen. Hajime nonchalantly turned his back towards her. The normal Kaori would do an approach by saying, “It’s okay to watch,” though embarrassed, but the current Kaori hurriedly finished changing her clothes without saying anything.

“I-I am done… So, what should we do?”

“Let’s see… Even if we go to seabed again, we still don’t know where the others are… but there’s nothing we can do other than keep searching. Those girls would probably do so as well.”

After looking at the jungle nearby, Hajime turned around. Kaori nodded at him while smiling; a smile hiding her depressed heart. Hajime slightly narrowed his eyes at Kaori’s smile, but he didn’t say anything in the end and started to walk.

Advancing along the pure-white sandy beach, creating sounds as they walked, the two entered the jungle. The dense trees and bushes were cut by Hajime. Kaori was only following him from behind.

Then, Hajime suddenly halted and turned towards Kaori, put his hand on the back of Kaori’s head as if to embrace her.

“Fue? Ah, umm, Hajime-kun? Wh-What’s with this sudden…”

Kaori blushed, but Hajime immediately separated and she instantly paled when she saw the thing on Hajime’s hand.

It was a spider. With size almost as big as a palm, it was moving its twelve legs with violet liquid dripping from it. Some of the legs grew like a normal spider while some grew from its back; a structure expressing it was capable of moving using both sides! It looked disgusting.

“Don’t let your guard down, okay? A Great Dungeon is vastly different compared to the surface of Orcus. Don’t think of it as the same or else you’ll experience pain.”

“U-Un. Sorry. I will be careful.”

“…”

The spider Hajime caught didn’t have magic stone, a normal poisonous spider. The fact that she was almost killed by creature other than a demonic beast, and how Hajime helped her, made Kaori even more depressed.

When she was still in Kouki’s party, she was an all-rounder, however, in Hajime’s party, she isn’t at all useful. It made Kaori panic more and more inwardly.

As such, Kaori put even more attention towards the surroundings which caused the conversation between the two to lessen, and they got out of the jungle with a subtle atmosphere between them.

Ahead of them was…

“This… isn’t this the so-called ship’s graveyard?”

“Amazing… those are sailing ships, but the size…”

In the rocky area ahead of the jungle were several partly rotted sailing ships lodged. The sailing ships were around a hundred meters in length at the lowest, and in the far

distant was an even bigger one with at least three hundred meters in length.

The bizarre spectacle made Hajime and Kaori unconsciously halted their advance. However, it didn't take a long time for Hajime and Kaori to regain their senses and entered the ship's graveyard.

They advanced by passing through the gaps between rocks, sometimes passing over them, while at other times, they walked on the ships.

"Even so… there are only battleships here."

"Un. But only the biggest one there seems to be a passenger boat. It has luxurious decorations on it…"

The ships in this graveyard didn't have cannons located at the starboard side like those battleship (sail-type) on earth. Even so, Hajime was able to conclude they were battleships because there were marks of fierce battle on all of the ships. From the appearance of the ships, they seemed to have received magic attacks. Some have their masts cleanly cut, burnt, carbonized decks, and petrified ropes and nets.

They didn't have any cannon, so they used long-ranged magic to defeat the enemies which was a battle method imaginable from the marks remained.

Then, Hajime's guess was proven to be a fact when he and Kaori were halfway through the ship's graveyard.

— UoOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!

— WAaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

"-!? What the!?"

"Hajime-kun! The surroundings are—!"

When they felt they heard shout of many men all of a sudden, the surroundings scenery began to distort. Hajime and Kaori stopped walking from the surprise and

they observed the surroundings to observe what was happening. The surrounding distortion became even more intense and before they were aware of it, Hajime and Kaori were already on a ship's deck, above the vast ocean.

Following that, they looked at their surroundings, it was not the ship's graveyard, but hundreds of sailing ships divided into two groups, confronting each other. Above the ships were people raising their weapons while shouting.

"Th-The heck is this…"
"Ha-Ha-Hajime-kun? Am I currently inside a dream? Hajime-kun, you are here, right? Right?"

Both Hajime and Kaori were taken aback, but they somehow managed to get out of their confusion, however, they weren't able to look at their surroundings.

While they did so, a big spark rose into the sky, generating firework-like loud voices followed by the hundreds of ships moving out simultaneously. The fleet on the side of the ship Hajime and Kaori rode on also moved out after the firework rose.

And when the ships approached a certain distance, they used the momentum to ram the other ships used its bodies, while magic were also fired.

GOoOOOOOOOO!!
DOoGAaAAAN!!
DOBAaAAAA!!!

"Owh!?"

"Kyaa!"

Flame bullets fired accompanied by roaring sounds and created holes in the ships' bodies. Huge tornadoes advanced aiming at the masts. The sea's surface froze, stopping the ships. And bullets of gray-colored sphere

instantly petrified everything.

Even the deck Hajime and Kaori were on was hit by the flame bullets and began to blaze up grandly. The ship's crews immediately activated magic to draw up the sea water and extinguished the fire.

It was literally a battlefield where innumerable people and ships fought on. The fired magic clad in killing intent grazed their skins.

Hajime and Kaori absentmindedly watching these spectacle, and once again fire bullets fired from behind them. The bullets' courses were aimed straight towards Hajime and Kaori.

Hajime buried his question of why did they suddenly were involved in this war in his head, and he pulled out Donner because it was OK to kill everyone because they attacked first. Thus, he intercepted the fire bullets using the railgun.

The bullet fired was accompanied by explosive sound and a flash, but unexpectedly it didn't even hit the flame bullets much more intercepting them. The bullet flew into the sky, and it disappeared.

"What!?"

Raising surprised voice for the nth times, Hajime embraced Kaori by his side and began to evade.

"Wait, I will obstruct them! "Light Severance"!"

With Kaori's chant, the beginner-level defense magic of light attribute appeared.

Hajime tried to evade because the unknown magic kept going even after their cores were hit, but Kaori had activated her magic and couldn't move away from there. Reluctantly, he activated "Vajra" and waited for the flame bullets.

However, Hajime's worry proved to be groundless

because Kaori's barrier completely blocked the flame bullets. With dubious expression, Hajime thought whether he just misfired while tilting his head, and he once again fired at the incoming flame bullets. Even this time, Hajime's Magic Eye indeed saw the cores being hit, but the bullet just passed through the flame bullets and flew towards the day after tomorrow..

"… Is that it?"

Seeing that, Hajime was guessing why his attack wasn't effective and decided to try another method of attacking. Kaori tried to put up another barrier to block the incoming flame bullets, but Hajime stopped her and activated "Wind Claw" in Donner. Following that, he evaded, and at the same time, he slashed the flame bullets using "Wind Claw." This time, the flame bullets didn't pass through and slashed in two.

"Umm, Hajime-kun?"

"It doesn't seem to be an illusion nor was it a real thing. The physical attack didn't effective, but attacks that contained magic power are effective. Good grief, what's with this situation."

Hajime spat a sigh from this troublesome situation and "Gwaa," an agonized voice rang right from behind him. While wondering what it was, he turned around and there was a young man crouching while suppressing his abdomen, while his other hand was holding a cutlass. Looking carefully, there was a pool of blood below him and blood covered icicle rolling nearby. He must have been shot with the icicle.

"Are you okay!?," Kaori immediately raised her voice while approaching him, and then she used her healing magic. A pure-white light released from her and wrapped the man. He should be healed in a blink of an eye because Kaori was a "Healer"… or so she thought, but

the result was unexpected. The moment the young man received Kaori's healing magic, he turned into light particles and disappeared.

"Eh? Eh? W-Why…" After a little pondering, Hajime told the confused Kaori what he thought had happened.

"Wasn't it because the effect and attribute of the magic didn't matter as long as it carried magic power?"

"… Then, I-I just… killed that person…"

"Kaori, this is not reality. Just think of it as "an illusion where we can move freely." Besides, you can't call something that disappeared by being healed a human."

"Hajime-kun… un, you are right. I am sorry that I was confused a little there. But I am okay now."

Though slight, Hajime said words of concern to Kaori. However, Kaori didn't feel happy like the usual her, only drooping her shoulders apologizing. Then, she smiled to smooth things over. Seeing her reaction made Hajime inadvertently muttered the thing he had thought since earlier.

"… You keep apologizing, eh."

"Eh? Did you say something?"

"No, nothing." Hajime moved his gaze from Kaori.

It was not because of the subtle atmosphere drifting around Kaori, but because he felt ominous presences. When he looked around, the soldiers were shouting and attacking the nearby ships, and before they were aware of it, several men with dark gazes were looking at Hajime and Kaori.

Kaori noticed Hajime's gaze and looked at the direction he was watching, and the men immediately came to attack Hajime and Kaori.

"For the God!"

“Long live! Eht-samaa!”

“Pagans! Die for our God!”

They were in frenzy. With bloodshot eyes, they declared while scattering saliva around. Completely abnormal.

He was able to guess it was a war between countries from how the fleets looked like, and he finally understood the reason for it. It was a religious war. If he strained his ears, he could hear the other soldiers in the other fleets were shouting similar things. However, they were shouting different God’s name.

Kaori could only stand in blank surprise inside the frenzied atmosphere.

Embracing Kaori from behind, Hajime thrust out and fired Donner over his shoulder. Only, the fired thing was not a bullet but mass of pure magic power. Using “Magic Power Compression” and “Magic Power Emission” derived from “Magic Power Manipulation,” he was able to blow off magic power without affecting the target physically. In a sense, it was a flawless technique to disarm the target because human and even demonic beast wouldn’t be able to move if their magic power was exhausted. This move had always been kept inside of him because he would not use such a lukewarm method on his enemy.

However, this lukewarm method was the most useful in this situation. The bright red bullet fired by Donner momentarily cut through the space and pierced the forehead of one of the frenzied, cutlass swinging soldier. Without stopping, the bullet hit the soldier behind the previous one, too, and their bodies instantly dispersed.

“Kaori! We are going to jump! Don’t bite your tongue!”

“Eh? —Kyaaaaa!!”

It would be troublesome if they were surrounded on the

deck, so Hajime jumped using “Aerodynamic” while embracing Kaori. Kaori screamed from the powerful momentum.

Kicking the soldier on the crow’s nest, Hajime landed in one of four crow’s nest on the masts.

Below them, the frenzied soldiers were looking up at Hajime and Kaori with bloodshot eyes.

Even though there were the enemies from other countries, too, somehow some of the men were targeting Hajime and Kaori. Moreover, the ones targeting them didn’t have any distinction between allies and enemies. Their numbers keeps increasing one after another just like a bad case of contagious virus.

Before even a moment passed and in front of their own enemies, the soldiers suddenly stopped moving and twisted their heads, staring at Hajime and Kaori. They immediately came crowding towards the two like a horror movie. The frenzied air even made Kaori pale.

“Now then, what shall we do to get out of this disgusting space?”

“… Maybe there’s something like… an exit?”

“We are in the middle of the sea, you know?”

“Maybe there’s an exit in one of these ships? … see, something like wherever door.”

Kaori recalled and compared it to the convenient tool of the blue cat robot. Looking at the surroundings, Hajime frowned and objected her idea because the ships were too numerous.

“… From what I can see, there’s at least six hundred ships here… it’s impossible to search one by one. Don’t you think we’ll be able to find the exit faster if the war ended?”

“Umm~, indeed, there are also the sunken ship… Then,

shall we…end the war?”

“End it… I see, time to kill everyone, huh? Kaori also can say something extreme, eh.”

“Eh? Umm, I don’t mean that…”

“Yup, that must be it. No other thing comes to my mind, and I like it better this way.”

Firing bullets of magic power and shooting through the several soldiers climbing using the ropes on the mast, Hajime thought it would be better if he had make a magic gun. He thought so while he continued firing the bright red bullets along with “Remote Control” derived from “Magic Power Manipulation,” making them intercepted the incoming flame bullets.

“Kaori, I know you aren’t proficient in offensive magic, but even healing magic becomes offensive magic here. And even if we don’t know how to escape from here, it is the truth that we are being attacked, so let’s knock them all down.”

“O-Okay!”

Hearing Hajime’s words, Kaori began her chant with resolute expression while trembling. The frenzied battlefield seemed to shave off at Kaori’s mind, but she absolutely didn’t want to show a disgraceful behavior to the important one beside her.

Hajime was glaring at the surroundings as if protecting her.

Looking down, allies and foes were mixed as they boarded the ship, killing each other. Unlike what happened when Hajime and Kaori attacked, the killing in this illusion was full of bloodshed.

On the deck were someone’s entrails, cut limbs, and splattered heads. Everyone was repeatedly shouting “For the God,” “Pagan,” and “Divine Punishment,” with

frenzied eyes as they spread killing intent.

Within the fresh blood of the soldiers scattered just like a storm of cherry blossom, the crow's nest where Hajime and Kaori, no, it was more like the soldiers were obstinately targeting Hajime and Kaori.

Time to time, bright red bullets flew about in all directions, shooting through the enemies. Furthermore, they flew around Hajime and Kaori to protect them, positioned as both offense and defense at the same time.

However, the frenzied soldiers weren't even worried, repeatedly attempted suicide attacks. Tens of the soldiers used flight magic while there were those who approached by going from one mast to another. It could be seen that the fight was concentrated on the ship where Hajime and Kaori rode. Hajime's Magic Eye also caught the fluctuation of magic power of highest-ranked magic from the hand of the magicians aiming at them.

At the time, Hajime thought of sniping them, but Kaori's chant ended and she activated highest-ranked magic of her.

"— — people, held out your arms as this is the place where Holy Mother smiling at, "Scripture"!"

Then, ripple of light spread into the battlefield with Kaori as its center.

The ripple throbbed as it expanded for so so many times, reaching one kilometer in radius. The enemy who touched by the ripple was wrapped by light.

Highest-ranked healing magic of light attribute, "Scripture."

It was a super wide-ranged healing magic with effect of healing everyone inside its area. The range itself was depended on the amount of user's magic power and proficiency, but at its worst, its effective range was 500

meters in radius. Moreover, if the user gave out the "sign" beforehand, it would be able to heal specific object. And normally this magic was used with tens of magician, and took a lot of time to chant along with its stupidly gigantic magic array. To be able to activate it in only one, two minutes alone was impossible unless one was a cheat-like character.

At the same time the light of "Scripture" activated by Kaori wrapped the battlefield, all soldiers inside the effective area had their bodies dispersed without distinction of ally or foe. When the magic ended, Kaori's body tilted from magic power exhaustion, and was thus promptly supported by Hajime.

"Ohh, a mass reproduction of the Mary Celeste, huh. You did great, Kaori. No, should I say as expected of you?"

"Ah, uh, th-there's no such a thing. Hajime-kun and the others are far more amazing…"

Honest praise from Hajime made Kaori's cheeks blush from embarrassed. She made a self-ridiculing smile as she thought Yue would be able to use more powerful magic quickly. Then, she muttered ""Replenish,"" to replenish the lost magic power from the pendant given by Hajime. Hajime had improved the pendant with magic array and the ability of taking out the stocked magic power by chanting because Kaori was incapable of directly manipulating magic power.

Hajime slightly knitted his eyebrows and wanted to say something when he saw Kaori's expression, but he put it aside for now because he had to deal with the new incoming enemies. The battle had restarted.

With the ineffectiveness of physical attack, it was a situation where the large amount of soldiers didn't falter against any kind of attack as they battled on the ship. Normally, it might be a hard situation, but there were

cheat-like monsters present.

Big fleets of two countries were afterwards annihilated by the two humans in a span of one hour.

* * *

"… Uuh, cough, kafh, sorr-…"

"It's alright. Just endure it."

Immediately after the last soldiers were annihilated, their surroundings were once again distorted. They noticed that they had returned to ship's graveyard from before.

Wondering if the annihilation was indeed the correct answer, Kaori immediately sighed in relief, ran to the nearby rock, and vomited. However, she vomited nothing since the dinner she ate had already been digested, and thus she felt a pain from trying to vomit.

With tears accumulated in the corner of her eyes, Kaori used one hand to tell Hajime "Don't come," to stop him.

However, Hajime still approached her and rubbed her back. Kaori didn't want to show such a pitiful sight to him, but she felt comforted from the gentle and warm feelings transmitted to her back. Her nausea and spirit gradually recovered.

Hajime took out apple juice-like drink from "Treasure Box" and presented it to her. Kaori obediently drink it heartily and her energy returned. The sweet and fresh taste, flushed the sour taste of gastric juice.

"Sorry…"

Kaori who knitted her eyebrows and apologized for the trouble made Hajime narrowed his eyes.

"Well, I think it is inevitable. Even I feel disgusted by it. I never thought humans would be so frenzied because of their blind belief. …Anyway, let's rest for now. Even I want to recover my considerably used magic power."

“… Un. Say, Hajime-kun. What was that illusion? Is it related to these ship wreckages.”

Kaori stood up then sat on the nearby rock, and then she asked him. Hajime took a little time to think before told her his conjecture.

“It is just a maybe, but I think the illusion might have been reproducing a battle in the past. … well, it seemed there’s also some improvement to attack those challenging the dungeon… or it might have been the concept of this dungeon.”

“Concept?”

“Yeah. Tio said it when we were in “Guryuu-en Great Volcano”. She said ‘isn’t it possible that each of the dungeon had its own concept prepared by the “Liberators”?’ If that’s true, then here is…”

“…To know the misery brought by the Mad Gods… maybe?”

“Aah, I think so, too.”

Continuing Hajime’s words by muttering the answer, Kaori recalled the spectacle from before, her face once again turned pale, and her body trembled as if she was suffering from a cold.

What made Kaori felt sick was the madness from the soldiers. Their behavior and speech were exactly of those so called “Fanatic” while she also couldn’t help but feel disgusted from the killing.

The people continued to laugh loudly in a frenzy even when blood were spraying from their bodied. There were even those who died from gouging their own hearts out, raised it towards the sky as an offering to their Gods. There was also an older brother who stabbed through his own younger brother just to attack Hajime and Kaori, while the younger one laughed proudly. War itself was a

place filled with madness, but one they just saw was far too ghastly. And it was wage all “For our God,” so…

Seeing Kaori covering her mouth because she couldn’t endure it, Hajime sat right beside Kaori and grasped Kaori’s hand. He couldn’t leave Kaori, who sickened by the madness, alone. Kaori was slightly surprised, looked at Hajime, relaxed, and squeezed Hajime’s hand back.

“Hajime-kun, thank you…”

“Don’t mind it. I understand… the pain from being exposed to the madness. I felt that when I fell into the abyss…”

“… Then, how? … Wait, there’s no need for you to answer… It was… Yue-san, right?”

“Yeah, it was because of her. If I hadn’t met her inside the abyss… I wonder how I would have ended up.”

Hajime looked into the distance in affection and nostalgia. He was surely recalling the time he met Yue. Seeing his expression made Kaori felt her chest squeeze.

“It’s mortifying. To defend, to protect Hajime-kun… I wanted to do that. But even if I said that, it’s not like I can do anything. Since it’s me… who I couldn’t even protect a promise. Ah～, Yue is a really powerful enemy～.”

Kaori joking laughter made Hajime narrowed his eyes again. Kaori’s smile was not the usual warm, positive smile because it might have also included self-torment and self-ridicule.

“… You’ve been apologizing since we came here, and don’t make such a smile.”

“Eh? Ummm…”

Hajime’s sudden words made Kaori raised “?” above her head. However, her smile immediately collapsed and her expression stiffened from Hajime’s next words.

“… Listen, Kaori. Why did you follow us here?”

“… That’s… am I just a burden after all?”

The downcast Kaori made Hajime sigh, and he didn’t answer her question.

“I remember the talk we had under the moonlight while drinking that disgusting tea that day. That’s why, honestly, I don’t think it’s weird that you have goodwill for the current me .”

“Hajime-kun, I…”

“However, I have no intention of denying it. I am sure Kaori had things only you can see, and that’s what stirred your heart. Thus, there’s no meaning for me to deny the decision you made. I have given you my answer, “even so” I think it’s a good thing that you favor me. Even Shia didn’t even feel discouraged. Rather, she recently made me seriously worry if she was going to attack me in my sleep.”

Hajime recently felt the dread as he thought of the rabbit-eared girl with bugged physical strength. Seeing such a Hajime, Kaori made a wry smile in agreement.

“… Un, I think her aggressiveness and positiveness amazing.”

“I treated her harshly at the beginning. I didn’t think of anyone as “special” other than Yue… I honestly thought she was going to give up quickly.”

“…”

“No matter how harsh I treated her, how I treated Yue as special, and she was always neither angry nor did she cry, but she seemed happy about it. She couldn’t compare to Yue in magic usage because she didn’t have aptitude in magic, and even if she was defeated in a mock battle against Yue, she didn’t stop to move forward. She didn’t cower even though she was attacked by her own

inferiority complex."

"I-I, thing like inferiority complex…"

Kaori who silently listening to Hajime, couldn't help to object and stood up. However, she was exhausted and immediately sat back.

"Didn't you notice it? You've been apologizing since we came here. Even the way you smiled is completely different than the usual."

"Eh?"

"Listen, Kaori. Don't keep looking down. Raise your face and look into my eyes."

That being said, Kaori finally noticed she had been looking down for a while now. Before, she made sure to look at the other person's eyes when talking… thus, when Kaori met Hajime's gaze she realized.

"Listen here, I will not say it for the second time. I love Yue. Even if I thought of others as "important," it won't change that only Yue is "special." So if you feel pain from it, if you feel you are inferior compared to Yue… Kaori, you should part from me."

"Kh…"

The blunt words made Kaori look down again. Hajime continued talking even though he did see her reaction.

"The reason I allowed Kaori to accompany us at that time is because of the same reason as Shia; I judged it'd be the best for Kaori to be by my side, because I trust Kaori. You understood my feelings, "even so" you moved ahead for your wish. That's why I thought it'd be okay for you by my side if you favor me… but, I don't feel the same way now."

When Hajime ended his words, he separated his hand from the downcast Kaori's. Then, he spun the ending words.

“Please think carefully about it once more. Why did you come along with us, and if should you stay by my side from now on… Kaori is not Shia. Shia likes Yue, too. … Depending on your answer, I will send you back to your best friend (Yaegashi).”

“I-I…”

Kaori wanted to say something as she watched the hand separating from her own, the words wouldn’t come out.

Inside the awkward atmosphere, Hajime urged Kaori to move because it was necessary for them to approach the biggest sailing ships enshrined at the distance.

Chapter 94 - Once Again, I Remember

Hajime and Kaori looked up at the sailing ships. Even on Earth, early sailing ships couldn't match the gigantic scale of this one.

No less than 300 meters in length, and as large as a ten story building, it was only being partly visible from the ground. All along their hull magnificent decorations were mounted. Although rotted, they still gave off a strong impression that made you want to admire them. On their wooden ship, Hajime, who also specialized in manufacturing the same decorations, was grudgingly impressed with the extent they had detailed their ships, and couldn't help but admire the time and effort the artisans put into creating them.

While hugging Kaori, Hajime jumped up using "Void Grip" and landed on the Terrace at the top of the Luxury liner. Then, sure enough, the surrounding space began to distort.

"Again?… Kaori stay alert. Something is bound to happen."

"Un. It looks fine to me."

Hajime felt that Kaori's laidback response wasn't suitable for someone still in the middle of challenging a Great Dungeon. It had become clear for a while now that Kaori's tension had dropped sharply. Even though she was still putting on a smile, Hajime could tell that it was different from all her usual ones. He was sure she wasn't doing it on purpose, but her new distracted attitude wasn't good for their current situation. She should at least hold it in check until the exploration of 【Meljeene Deep Sea Ruins】was done, Hajime thought while

sharply scratching his cheek.

Hajime took a quick survey of their altered environment, this time it seems they were on top of a luxury liner sailing out at sea.

Presently it's night time, with the full moon shining in the heavens. The luxury liner is shining with light sparkles, and on the deck there are various arrangements buffet-type style cuisines lined up with many people who were chatting about while having delicious-looking food in one hand. Presently it was night time, with a full moon glowing in the heavens. The luxury liner shone with sparkling lights, and on the deck were various arrangements of buffet-style cuisine lined up with a crowd of people chatting together while holding delicious-looking food in one hand.

"This is a party…isn't it?"

"Haa, it sure is dazzling. Did we misunderstand Meljeene's concept?"

Hajime and Kaori were standing upon a raised terrace, probably an area reserved for the crew, while looking down on the enormous deck and trying to get their heads around the difference between this cheerful party and the ghastly sight they had witnessed last time.

Then, just as they decided to take a brief rest, the door behind them opened and several chatting sailors walked out. Rather than risk losing this chance while they took a rest, they decided to mix in with the sailors and listen to their conversation.

From listening to the sailor's stories they learned that this maritime party was apparently being held in celebration of the end of the war. The war that had continued for so many years, rather than ending through invasion and annihilation, had been resolved by signing a peace treaty. The sailors seemed happy, and if they looked closely they

were able to see that not only were there humans on the deck but also devils and demi-humans. Without distinction for race, everyone was freely chatting among themselves.

“There was an age such as this, wasn’t there?”

“It certainly was a great achievement for all those people to give so much effort to end the war. Although I’m not sure how many years have passed since the end of the war, surely not all of the ill feelings have faded, yet they are still able to laugh so freely…”

“Surely the people down there must be similar to those who tried their best to end the war. Everyone is different, seeing this doesn’t necessarily mean that everyone is able to laugh together so soon.”

“That’s true…”

Getting caught up in the atmosphere and bright expressions of the people, Hajime and Kaori also naturally loosened up. After a while they saw an elderly man climbing up onto a stage prepared on the deck. There was a sense of respect in the eyes of the people below as they noticed him on stage and abruptly stopped chatting to focus on him.

There was another man who appeared to be an aide standing near the elderly man, but for some reason he was wearing a hood and trying to blend in with the background. Given the occasion, Hajime thought that his appearance was a bit rude… however it didn’t look like anyone else was concerned about the hooded man.

Eventually, when all the chatter had subsided, the elderly man began his speech.

“Gentlemen, those who wished for peace, the brave souls who ran through the war risking their lives, are the messengers of peace. Today, at this place, I truly feel that

it's a great fortune for all of us to be able to meet here together. It was a war that begun a long time, even for my generation, yet we were able to stand together in peace after bringing an end to the war. To see such a dream come true… my heart still trembles."

Everyone was listening in silence as the old man spoke. As the speech continued, events such as doubt, crossing paths and incidents became stepping stones towards peace. He spoke of those who were often reckless in their attempts to overturn this, and the friends who scattered during the middle… as the speech progressed everyone eyes begun to look far away, yearning for their missed ones and suppressing moisture from the corners of their eyes, enduring the urge to let their tears flow.

It would seem the old man is the king of the Humans. Among the humans, even at the early stages of the war, it seemed as there was a movement behind the scenes for peace. The people now nod to show their respect.

Finally it seemed as though the speech ended. The king still seems quite worked up after his speech, the atmosphere on the deck is also still quite worked up. However Hajime is attacked by a bad premonition. Something feels off, he has seen the expression the king is wearing somewhere before.

"–and thus, one year has passed since the signing of the peace treaty …….. It was all so foolish."

At the words of the King, for a moment the crowd appeared puzzled, Hajime thought he had misheard him. Everyone was looking at each other in confusion. In the meantime the King's heated speech continued.

"Yes, it truly was foolish. To see both the beasts and the heretics talking about the future and exchanging drinks, it was ridiculous. Do you understand, gentlemen? That's right, I am talking about you."

“What on earth are you saying Aleist?! Hell, what’s wrong with sayin- gaah!?”

With the sudden change of King Aleist, one of the devils who was agitated stood up before him. Then, as he tried to question King Aleist…. the sudden result was a sword growing from his chest.

The demon tribe man who was stabbed, looked back over his shoulder to see the startled expressions of the human tribe. By looking at their faces you could tell they were all honestly surprised. With a final expression of disbelief, the man of the Demon tribe collapsed.

Screams arose and the entire deck fell into an uproar. “Your Majesty!”, cried several men and women as they rushed to the collapsed body of the Demon tribe man.

“Well gentlemen, as I stated originally, I am truly happy to bring everyone together tonight. We will create a country free from the races that were abandoned by god, where all can be equal.

From the Genesis there was only one god, ‘Ehito-sama’. Those who turned their backs on him, foolishly worshiping a false god, such pagans mustn’t be allowed to leave! It will end today! The only path to peace is through destroying all the heathens! Therefore, this day, as we sweep away the leaders of the non-believers, I cannot help but rejoice! Now, servants of God, pass judgement on these heathens with the hammer of justice! Aah! Ehito-sama, please watch over our work!”

King Aleist’s laughter echoed loudly as he fell onto his knees and gazed up towards the heavens. At the same time he signaled soldiers, who had been dressed as sailors, to completely surrounded the party on the deck.

The deck is positioned in the middle of the ship, sandwiched between a gigantic mast and the main structure, 10 floors high running from front to back. If

you look, the soldiers are occupying the scaffolding on the terrace and mast, arranged so that they can focus on the targets below them. Out at sea there is nowhere they can escape to, the geographical advantage is entirely on the soldier's side. Hajime would've been aware of this already, but the countries leader's expressions of despair showed they were only just realising it now.

In an instant, all the magic was finally released and bombarded the deck. Although the passengers fought back desperately, they were at a disadvantage… it was a one-sided massacre as those who resisted were slaughtered.

Those who ran fled towards the inside of the ship, however most of them were killed as they ran. The deck had been completely changed into a sea of blood in only an instant.

"Ugh"

"Kaori…"

Kaori covered her mouth with one of her hands to suppress the nausea as she leant on the railing. The sight was so horrific that it was no wonder Hajime reached out and offered Kaori his support.

It appears King Aleist felt like hunting as he soon joined his subordinates in pursuing the remnants who had fled into the ship.

The hooded man followed the king into the ship. Just before he stepped inside he turned and looked back at the deck. In that instant a tuft of silver hair escaped from the fringe of his hood and shone brightly in the reflected moonlight. His hidden eyes met theirs and for a moment Hajime's thought they had been seen.

The surroundings distorted, apparently the dungeon only want to show them that previous scene, Hajime and

Kaori were soon back to on top of the derelict luxury liner.

“Kaori, rest for a little bit.”

“No, I’m fine. Although it was somewhat intense… but I wonder if that was really the end of that trial… we didn’t even do anything.”

“I think this ship graveyard is its ending point. Although we could’ve explored the sea beyond the barrier… if you think about it normally, people who wanted to proceed out into the depths of the sea would need to use the ship. Perhaps witnessing that scene was itself the purpose of the vision. To burn the gruesomeness of the gods work into your memory so you would feel compelled to explore this ship as a result. It’s a pretty nasty idea, especially for the people from this world.”

The people of this world, though few of them would make it here, are expected to have faith in the gods. To show them such a gruesome result of their faith… it would surely torture a gentle spirit, and this Labyrinth’s vital point for exploration is the power of magic which heavily relies on one’s mental state. In that sense, it was the reverse of Raisen Great Labyrinth. It was only because Hajime came from another world that the results of this mental pressure was of such a small degree.

Hajime and Kaori both looked over the deck with an expression indicating their reluctant remembrance of the ghastly massacre that had occurred here. However in Hajime’s case, his face looked more like he was remembering a bad sports foul.

Having made their resolve, the two of them jump down onto the deck and set foot near the door that King Aleist once entered who knows how long ago.

The inside of the ship was completely enclosed in darkness. Since the outside was bright, it wouldn’t have

been strange for light to shine in through crevices in the rotted wood, but for some reason there was no light at all. In order to push forward into the darkness Hajime took a light out from his 'Treasure box'.

"That sight earlier… Even though the war was already over… I wonder, did king really betray them…?"

"That's what it looked like… However, wasn't it a little bit strange? When he stood up on stage those people looked at him with eyes full of love and respect… If deep down you truly hated Demons and Demi-humans, would you really be able to earn such deep respect?"

"That's true… Based on the way those people were speaking to him, it seems like there must've been a sudden change sometime during the one year after the end of the war… What could have happened to cause such a change of heart?"

"Well, without a doubt they were fighting for their god, they were shouting it loudly enough. They gave off an almost deranged feeling."

"Yeah, they looked like Ishtar-san, abusing their religion to look down on others. It's pathetic isn't it?"

Apparently, from the high school girls perspective, the Pope of the Sacred Church was a pathetic person. However, Hajime only had the smallest feeling of sympathy for him upon hearing it. The two of them continued forwards, still thinking about the earlier scene, until they spotted something ahead shining in response to Hajime's light.

Hajime and Kaori stop their feet and watched as the light slowly approached them. When it got closer they could see that it was a girl in a fluttering white dress. She stopped in the hallway in front of them and stood there, swaying slightly with her head looking downwards.

Kaori and Hajime felt something unpleasant and shuddered violently. Kaori's expression became particularly stiff while Hajime, deciding that an ordinary girl wouldn't be in a place like this, pointed Donner at the girl with the intention of killing her.

Instantly, the girl collapsed into the hallway with a soft thump. Then, at an angle impossible for a normal human's joints, raised herself up onto her hands and feet like a spider and launched herself straight at them!

Ketaketaketaketaketaketaketaa! (TN: Spider girl's laugh?)

Her bizarre laughter echoed throughout the hallway. Shining eyes, just like those from urban legends, glared at them from between her bangs, as Hajime shot at the approaching figure.

(TN: Actually genderless, but whatever. Editor wanted to add "her". Meh)

(EN: We've already described it as a girl, seemed appropriate).

(TN: Meh. Whatever. I am tired.)

"NOOOOOOOOO!!!!"

"Wah!? Calm down Kaori! Don't grab my arm!"

Just like the template for this situation called for, Kaori clung onto Hajime and let out a scream. The girl approaching them laughed at her mockingly. Hajime, who was trying to shoot the girl with Donner, had his aim shifted due to Kaori clinging onto him.

"Kegya!!"

In a moment the girl was at Hajime's feet. Then, with her bizarre cry, she lept straight at Hajime's face.

Hajime reluctantly gave up on trying to shoot her, and instead delivered a sure-kill yakuza-style kick straight into her still laughing stomach . As a precaution, he had

clad himself and magic and used ‘Grand Legs’ to deliver the blow. (TN: “Grand Legs”. New spell or what? Don’t remember it at all…. It’s in the character introduction chapter, but what the hell?”

The moment Hajime’s kick hit her stomach the girl was blown away into the wall, before bouncing several times and coming to a stop at the end of the hallway. Her limbs were now in an even more unnatural position she slowly vanished, as though melting into the darkness.

Hajime let out a sigh and then gave the still shaking Kaori clinging onto him a bonk on the head with his fist. With a start Kaori looked up at Hajime, an expression of fear still on her face. Tears clung to her eyes as her mouth let out a small squeak, anyone could see she was still terrified.

“Hey Kaori, are you bad with these ghoulish type of things?”

“Is there such a person who is good with them?!”

“Wouldn’t you be fine if you just thought of them as apparitions?”

“…. Gusuu, I’ll try my best.”

As Kaori promised, she separated herself from Hajime, however she didn’t let her hand go of Hajime’s clothes.

Until earlier she had been worried about what to say to Hajime, she had seemed more reserved than usual, but now a strong will dwelt in her eyes. She would absolutely not allow herself to be separated from him! It was a type of desperation, while simultaneously being an expression of her love for him.

Just as Kaori had finished gathering her resolve the door ahead of them in the hallway flew open with a bang. On the other side of the door there were countless bloodstains on the floor, and when they looked up they

saw the head of a woman with long, dripping wet, hair hung up on the ceiling looking down at them. At the same time they heard a noise and turned around to see a headless man dragging an axe along the floor behind him.

Hajime delivered another one of his yakuza-like kick to the headless man and readied his gun to follow up, but there was no need. The headless man was already dead from the kick.

“No more… I want to go back now… I want to see Shizuku-chan～”

As the proceeded further into the ship the strange phenomena became more and more violent, which caused Kaori to regress back into a child, clinging onto Hajime’s back and refusing to come out.

Ever since Kaori was small she had looked up to Shizuku as her knight & protector whenever she entered haunted houses or had to deal with Kouki and the boys. However, those feelings never crossed the boundary into being yuri.

Meljeene, the founder of 【Meljeene Deep Sea Ruins】, seemed to be trying to back them into an emotional corner. Hajime, having survived The Abyss, already had experience dealing with being surrounded by darkness and didn’t really find it very difficult to cope with, though he could understand how it would be difficult for someone with a more normal psyche to handle. However, he couldn’t imagine Tio or Yue sobbing from such surprises.

That was until a while ago when Kaori, while still half crying – half flirting, had stepped out and begun to repel the horrors using her healing magic. Seeing her sudden change in attitude had made Hajime want to tsukkomi “where did the scared and lost little girl like atmosphere

from earlier go?" as he watched her. As they advanced Kaori began to get more unsteady again, but together they eventually arrived at the ship's hold.

They stepped through the opened heavy doors. They proceeded towards the back of the ship's hold, moving in between the sparsely spread out cargo. However, before they had progressed far the doors behind them shut themselves with a loud 'boom!'

"Pii!?"

Kaori let out a strange voice at this surprising sound and Hajime began to worry whether or not she was keeping in mind their important talk about what she should do after finishing the labyrinth. It wasn't the first time this thought had crossed his mind.

However Hajime just let out a sigh and began to calmly stroking Kaori's shoulders. However the effectiveness of this tactic was disrupted when a thick fog began to slowly block their field of view.

"Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Hajime-kun!?"

"You're beginning to laugh just like a cheerful foreigner. Don't worry, just handle it like always. You'll be fine if you just crush them with your magic."

The moment Hajime replied they heard the ring of something as it tore through the wind, flying towards them. Hajime moved like a bolt of lightning and blocked the attack aimed at his neck with his left arm. When he lowered his left arm they could see an extremely thin thread stuck into it. They didn't have time to stare, soon there was the continuous ring of the wind being cut as arrows flew at them from all sides.

"To come so far just for a trap? It's so disgusting! That's just typical of those damn liberators!"

"Come forth, Guardian of Light. Absolute Light!"

Hajime was caught by surprise for a moment, however, since they were only a primitive weapons Kaori was able to block them with her defensive magic. Soon though, the fog ahead of them began to swirl violently and a fierce storm struck Hajime and Kaori.

“Kya!?”

Kaori was blown away in the storm, her screaming figure disappearing into the fog. Hajime, made a sour face as he tried to find her using his perception ability. Unfortunately, it seems the fog had a function that inhabited skills of the sensing system, similar to inside the【Haltina Sea of Trees】, thus he quickly lost track of her.

“Che. Kaori, don’t move!”

With a sour face Hajime called out to Kaori, but instead of Kaori a knight wielding a longsword came tearing out of the fog ahead of him. Using an unusual technique, he lunged fiercely and swung the sword at Hajime.

Parrying the attack calmly with Donner, he struck the his large opponent in the chest with Schlag then fired a magic bullet into his stomach with Donner. A hole opened in the knight’s stomach and he silently vanished into the mist.

However, immediately after a line of swordsmen and knights with abnormal strength emerged from the fog. These warriors held a variety of different weapons, and used the fog to launch attacks at Hajime one after another, fading back into the mist after each strike.

“Damn, so troublesome…”

While spitting out curses, Hajime expanded red magic bullets around his body like a satellite, also activating “Lightspeed”(瞬光) swiftly tidied up his surroundings. It was a concern to him that he could not hear Kaori’s

voice.

Hajime was concerned that he couldn't hear Kaori's reply. While spitting out curses Hajime launched bullets of red magic and made them orbit his body like satellites. At the same time he activated 'Lightspeed' and swiftly tidied up his surroundings.

Shifting to Kaori, with Hajime gone from her sight she was finding it hard to keep up a brave front. Kaori was really bad with horror, it would be very difficult to overcome her current predicament even under normal circumstances, but now her body wanted to freeze up just from the fear of being alone. Add in her strong inferiority complex, though she wouldn't admit it to herself, and the bottom line was that all she wanted to do was curl herself up and cry.

Kaori scolded herself, she mustn't let herself be found cowering like this, and forced her body to stand back up. As soon as she was upright again she felt a hand on her shoulder. Hajime would often encourage her by patting her on the shoulder. Overcome by happiness, Kaori found herself turning around in delight.

"Hajime-ku-"

However, as she turned around Kaori noticed that something felt off about the hand on her shoulder. To be more accurate, it felt too thin and too cold. Kaori felt chills run down her spine as her intuition warned her that what was behind her was not Hajime.

If it wasn't Hajime, then who on earth was it? Continuing to turn, now like a rusty machine, Kaori saw it. Eyes, nose, mouth… and then even more holes. It was the face of a woman dyed in a darkness as black as the abyss.

"Fuwah~"

Kaori's spirit was over in an instant, and her defensive instincts rendered her unconscious.

In the 2 minutes it took Kaori to get up and faint, Hajime had already destroyed 50 ghostly warriors. This was only his rough estimate based on killing one of the ghostly veterans every 2-3 seconds.

Just as he was beginning to think he had wiped them all out, a large man wielding a greatsword tore out from the fog, charged straight at him and swung a blow that boasted of enormous hidden strength.

Hajime dodged the attack with the smallest movement of his body. However it wasn't over yet. The warrior bounced the greatsword back into the air using the recoil from the blow to the ground and moved to attack again.

Hajime responded by activating 'Vajra', stopping the blow with his mechanical arm and jumping up onto the greatsword with his knees, forcing it from his opponents hands and trapping it against the ground. Then, with a swift motion he raised his gun and fired a magic bullet straight into the large man's head.

At the same time the large man's head was blown off the surrounding fog begins to fade away.

"Kaori! Where are you?"

Hajime focused all of his senses on finding Kaori's presence. However, even without doing that Kaori was easily found.

"I'm over here, Hajime-kun."

"Kaori, are you alright?"

Hajime divulged a sigh of relief upon seeing Kaori walking towards him with a smile. Once Kaori reached his side she snuggled up against against him with a beautiful smile.

"It was… very scary…"

“Is that so?…”

“Un. That’s why I want to be comforted”

As she said this Kaori threw her arms around Hajime’s neck and hugged him. At a distance so close they were practically nose-to-nose, Kaori locates Hajime’s mouth with her eyes and began to draw herself closer…

Gotsu (TN: Sound effect. *thunk*)

With a Gotsu～tsu sound (TN: *thunk*) Donner’s muzzle met Kaori’s temple.

“Wh-what…?”

Kaori appeared to be confused as Hajime narrowed his brutal-looking eyes and directed murderous intent towards her.

“What? Of course I’ll kill enemies, no matter how they look like” and without a beat of hesitation he pulled the trigger.

Karankara (*Clang-clang*)

There was the sound of a knife hitting the ground, it had fallen out of the hand of Kaori when she was shot. She had intended to stab him in the back as she was hugging him. With steady footsteps Hajime approached the collapsed Kaori.

Getting back up, Kaori begins talking to Hajime in a frightened and trembling voice.

“Hajime-kun, why would you do such a thing!?”

However Hajime response was to fire another magic bullet at Kaori.

“Don’t you dare speak with Kaori’s voice! Do not degrade her body by moving it! Did you think I couldn’t see the truth? You are nothing but a piece of trash possessing her body.”

Hajime’s ‘Magic Stone Eye’ had already revealed to him

that there was a ghostly woman possessing Kaori.

With the truth clearly exposed Kaori, who until just a moment ago had been cowering on the ground, instantly changed her expression and burst into mocking laughter.

“Nyahahaha, even if you know the truth it is of no matter. You can’t do anything…this girl’s body is already mine!

As she said this the possessed Kaori raised herself off the ground and pushed Hajime down onto the ground into the mounted position.

“Wait, what are you doing? This is your woman! Do you plan to hurt her!?”

“Shut up! You’re giving me a headache. Didn’t I tell you not to move? I’m not going to hurt Kaori, the magic bullets will pass right through her body, the only one who will suffer is you.”

“If I disappear this woman’s soul will shatter! Is that really alright with you!?”

At those words Hajime inclined his head slightly in thought. Although there was a good chance it wasn’t a bluff, there was no way to verify if it was true.

Most people would probably become trapped by indecision in this situation, was the possessed Kaori hoping for this? She was giving her cat-like laugh again while motioning for him to step aside. Seeing this Hajime gave her his reply.

Zupan～! Zupan!

It was a pair of magic bullets. The possessed Kaori’s expression was too shocked to reveal as to whether she had felt any pain. Soon her expression shifted into one of frustration as she shouted at Hajime in an angry voice.

“Are you insane!? Do you not care what happens to this woman!?”

“Shut up you pile of trash! If I don’t attack then Kaori’s body would remain possessed. However, as long as you aren’t killed her soul won’t break, right? Until you feel like leaving her body everything will be fine if I just torment you without killing you.”

The ghostly woman was left speechless at his words. When she looked into Hajime’s eyes she was being stabbed by his murderous intent that dwelt there.

“I’ll make you regret thinking you could touch what’s ‘important’ to me. Even though you’re an enemy I won’t kill you, I won’t let you experience the relief of death. I’ll make it so you can’t escape Kaori’s body even if you want to. I’ll force you to suffer until you go mad from the pain.”

Red magic flowed out from Hajime’s body, his white hair was caught in the eddies and slowly began to sway in the energy. There was no rage, bloodthirst or insanity in his eyes, they were like frozen chips of ice.

Hajime was furious, more so than ever before. He wouldn’t be satisfied with just kill his enemy this time, they must experience cruelty akin to the depths of hell.

The ghost possessing Kaori had been too dense to realise she had picked a fight with something that should never be disturbed. Only now, as she felt her gaze trapped in Hajime eyes, did she finally realise what she had awakened; a monster, one you would normally pray to never meet.

With Donner’s muzzle again pressed against her forehead, the ghostly woman earnestly begged for release. Even if all it bought her was permission to disappear a single second faster, when she imagined what this monster would probably do to her even one second seemed like a blessing.

She was just an ordinary ghost. Although it did seem that

her lingering essence was greater than than any of the other apparitions they had encountered, in the face of this atmosphere it all amounted to nothing. The frozen wrath Hajime was giving off was just that terrifying.

“Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear! Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear!Iwanttodisappear!”

The ghost’s sobs echoed louder as Hajime’s finger moved to pull the trigger, when suddenly the Kaori’s body began to shine. It was the sparkle of the restore-all-abnormal-status recovery magic ‘Ten Thousand Heavens’, which Kaori had prepared as a precaution ahead of time using the ability of ‘Delayed Invocation’.

While left dumbfounded by the feeling of unbelievable relief the ghost heard a voice from inside her.

“–It’s okay, I’ll send you off properly.”

Alongside these words the shining, pure white, light intensified. The ghost felt afraid as the light wrapped around her, dragging her gently along with it towards the heavens. However, as she gradually passed on to the next world and her consciousness began to fade she was overcome with a feeling of peace and relief.

With one clap, Kaori sent her off and slowly began to open her trembling eyelids. Hajime, still lying underneath Kaori in the mounted position, looked directly up into Kaori’s eyes. Ever since Kaori began to shine, the fading presence of the ghost’s existence had been reflected in Hajime’s Magic Stone Eye. For the moment he released his killing intent and focused on confirming whether the ghost had truly left Kaori.

Their faces were so close, and with Hajime’s lying underneath her, his gaze filled with a mixture of relief and worry as he focused his eyes intently on her pupils, it would’ve been enough to make anyone feel moved.

Gently lowering her head Kaori pressed her lips on Hajime's. It was only the barest meeting of their lips, but for Kaori it was still her precious first kiss.

Hajime whole body went stiffened in surprise for a moment. In order to be certain that Kaori had been released Hajime had used almost all his concentration to examine her. With his mind so distracted, naturally it wasn't possible for him to avoid a kiss.

After a while Kaori gently released his lips.

"What are you…?"

"Perhaps it's my answer?"

"Your answer?"

"Un. Why did I follow you? Why do I want to keep on following you?…. This is my answer to Hajime's questions."

When she said this Kaori smiled at Hajime. It was smile he had always seen her wearing, warm like a ray of light from the sun. Ever since coming here it had become clouded and covered up by a false laugh, but now it shone once again.

In fact Kaori had still retained her consciousness while possessed, though it felt like watching the world outside while trapped inside a glass room. She had still been able to see Hajime in never seen before state of fury, saying things like Kaori was 'important' to him. It had flowed right through the ghost and reached her heart.

At the sight of this Hajime unbearable sadness had risen up in her chest, but at the same time she felt the nervous passion she had when she first confessed to him.

If she wanted to explain it, it was a feeling of selfish, of always wanting to be indulged, always make them vividly aware of your presence. Mixed in amongst the circle of girls Yue allowed to surround Hajime, Kaori

found it intolerable that she wasn't allowed to hoard him all to herself, yet at the same time she didn't even want to imagine a future where she wasn't by Hajime's side.

She wanted to make them recognise that even if her capabilities were nowhere near Yue and the others, her feelings weren't any less.

"I like you Hajime-kun, no, I love you. That's why from here on I want our futures to be entwined."

"Won't it only leave you feeling bitter? Just like it is with Shia, even if Yue weren't there, it doesn't necessarily mean that I will love you back."

"That's true, it'll probably be painful at times…. I want to be monopolised, I want you to only look at me. I feel so jealous of Yue sometimes, and so inferior when I compare myself to her"

"If that's the case…"

"But I'll only regret it if I allow myself to be separated from you here, I'm sure of it. For me, just being near Hajime is wonderful….and that's how I've always felt. In time I want to close the gap between us even more, but for right now this is enough."

Pinching Hajime's cheeks between both her hands, Kaori smiled softly.

The expression on Hajime's face was a complex mix of troubled and amazed, but Kaori had decided on her own, and if she believes that it's the best decision for herself, Hajime wouldn't say another word. Each person had their own idea of happiness, deciding Kaori's happiness for her is something he couldn't do, nor did he want to.

"…. I see. If Kaori is fine with this then I won't say any more."

"Un. Although I'll probably cause a lot of trouble, please don't hate me, alright?"

“What are you saying at such a late hour? From our time at school, up to our time here, you have always been an terrible troublemaker.”

“That’s not true!”

“Really? Back at school you never read the situation and would casually come over and talk to me, completely unaware of the word bombs you were dropping everywhere, and never noticing that every time the guys around us would seethe with anger. And then let’s not forget when a negligee-clad lady decided to visit a man’s room in the middle of the night…”

“Uu, I remember, all I wanted to do was talk to you…. Un, it was really embarrassing when I realized later that I had come to your room dressed like that.”

While Kaori was covering her blushing face with her hands, Hajime got up and offered Kaori a hand up. Then, with a grin, patted Kaori on the shoulder gently, and turned to start walking towards the magic circle that had begun to shine further inside the storeroom once the fog had lifted.

However, he was stopped by Kaori tightly grabbing onto his sleeve. If he looked carefully he could see that she was still a little unsteady. Apparently the possession had dulled her body’s senses a little. Now that the body had been released it hopefully wouldn’t take long for it to return back to it’s normal state.

“Let’s rest for a little bit.”

Hajime had suggested this, but it seems Kaori had an idea of her own and with a smile she hopped up onto Hajime’s back.

“….What are you doing?”

“Isn’t it better if we progress quickly? I don’t know when my magic power will return and if we hang around here

the fog will surely come back, right?”

There was definitely some truth to her words,so Hajime replied with a “It can’t be helped” while scratching his head, and walked towards the magic circle while carrying Kaori.

Kaori wrapped her arms around Hajime’s neck and clung on tightly to his back. Although he didn’t say anything, Hajime was trying his best to ignore the soft feeling that pressing up against his back.

Kaori moved close enough that he could feel her hot breath in his ear. Her lips, close enough that they were almost touching his earlobe, opened gently and a sweet sound reverberated inside his ears.

“Hajime-kun… I want to asking you something about what happened earlier.”

“Earlier?”

“Yes. Why was it that you got so angry during that fight?”

“Saa, why was I angry? I don’t know.” (TN: “Don’t make a move on what’s ‘important’ to me.” …..Was he really an otaku before?)

“Mouu, please tell me～.”

Refusing to answer her questions or get caught up in her flirtatious atmosphere, Hajime continued to carry Kaori while moving forward at a brisk pace and without hesitation stepped into the magic circle.

Chapter 95 - Gross-Food Subjugation

Faint light shone on the surface of the sea, and it made the swaying waves a ceiling.

In that space, a building that was like a temple existed in the center, which was supported by four huge columns. There was no wall between the columns. A delicate, complex magic formation was drawn at the place that seemed to be an altar at the center of the temple. Still, from the temple whose surroundings were filled with ocean water, the pathway that floated on the surface of the sea extended in four directions, and the end went on to become a circle. And, a magic formation was also drawn on the footing of that circle.

One among the four magic formations began to shine suddenly. Then, after the momentary light that was like an explosion, the shadows of people stood there. It was Hajime and Kaori.

“……Here is…… Is that a magic formation? Unexpectedly, was it captured?”

“Um, is there some problem?”

“No, I didn’t think that it was really already cleared…… Though I felt it was a little easy when compared to the other Labyrinths…… Though I expected that clione to at least come out at the end……”

Apparently, understanding that they seemed to have arrived at the dwelling of Meiru Merujine, Hajime made an expression like he was a little let down. In contrast to that, Kaori, peeking at his face from over Hajime’s shoulder, replied while smiling wryly.

“You know, Hajime-kun. This place was plenty difficult.

The beginning is an undersea cave after all, and because normally you would not possess something like a submarine, you would continuously be consuming a lot of magical power the whole time until it was cleared, and if done poorly, as it is you would drown. The clione-like thing was an almost impossibly tough enemy, and because physical attacks were ineffective against the things that looked like ghosts, you will again rely on magical power. Because of that, breaking through cannot be done without fighting a large army. It's a sufficiently ridiculous degree of difficulty."

"Yeah, though I guess it might be so if you say so."

"Not to mention, as for the people of this world the piety seems to be strong…… To display such madness……"

"Too much mental intensity……?"

Kaori's point was, in short, that Hajime was too strong. When saying up to there, certainly, Hajime agreed that Guryuen Conflagration Mountain would have also been able to be captured flawlessly if not for the attack of Fried at the end.

And, come to think of it, they had arrived before joining up with Yue and the others, but at the time that he thought about what they were doing, the magic formation that was at the end of the path to the right began to shine like it had read Hajime's thoughts.

When the bursting light had settled down, the figures of the three people of Yue, Shia, and Tio were there. It was exquisite timing.

"Good timing. Was it OK over there?"

"N…… Over there…… was it not safe?"

"Ah, Kaori-san are you alright!?"

"Mu? Are you hurt? What happened to recovery magic?"

To Hajime's calling out, even though each of them

showed an energetic appearance, they sent gazes like they were worried at Kaori who was being carried on Hajime's back. Kaori's reply regarding that was……

"Thank you for worrying. But, I'm fine. Because half was just me being spoiled."

To Kaori who declared that boldly as she floated a truly cheerful smile, as Yue narrowed her eyes, Shia appealed with "I'm jealous. Please switch places with me～," and Tio raised a broad smile with a "Hohoo," seemingly amused.

"Hey, Kaori. Perhaps, can you already stand up?"

"Ehehe, actually from the beginning there was no problem with walking…… I'm sorry?"

"Haa, hurry up and get down."

To Kaori who laughed like a little evil slipped out, Hajime let Kaori down while showing an amazed expression. And then, they joined with Yue and the others and faced the temple.

"And? What happened? Hey, try to say it, Goshujin-sama. It seems something happened with Kaori? Hey, hey, what happened? Say it without hiding – hebuu!?"

Because she began to question him with an absolutely annoying feeling while Tio smirked, Hajime who became irritated dispatched an open handed slap at once. As she sat at ease, Tio, who had crumbled down with a fascinating slanting posture, colored her cheeks while breathing roughly.

"I-impact after a long time～, haa haa, n, Goshujin-sama, isn't it fine punishing me more? Isn't doing a kick instead good?"

In the atmosphere that was expected somewhere, ignoring Tio who said such things as she pleased, Hajime and the others went towards the altar inside. From the

back, “One more time, it is fine with one time! Please, hit me～,”though the disgusting words were heard, everyone ignored it with all of their power.

“……And? What happened?”

Yue asked the same question as Tio. However, the look was not at Hajime, it was faced at Kaori. Kaori, smiling sweetly in good humor as she matched gazes with Yue, dropped a bomb of words like the other day.

“I only kissed with Hajime-kun a little.”

“……Hou.”

“Eh!? Is that true!? From which one!? From which one was it!? It can’t be, from Hajime-san!?”

To Kaori’s words, Yue’s voice lowered one level, and Shia drew closer like she was excited.

“It was from me. ……Hajime-kun was angry for my sake…… I stole it not being able to endure it.”

“Waa, it’s the same as my time! I also stole one because I could not endure it. We’re comrades! Kaori-san!”

“Ufufu, that’s right, Shia. Next time, shall we steal one with two people?”

“In that case, should we rather make it to a fait accompli?”

Right at Hajime’s side, the two girls began to refine the Hajime attack plan. A cold sweat flowed on Hajime’s face. Though it looked like they were in high spirits going “Kya Kya” as they appeared to be joking, in fact, it was because the eyes of Kaori and Shia were serious. In the old days he never would have imagined Kaori turning carnivorous eyes towards him.

“……I thought you would run away with your tail rolled up.”

Yue turned a probing look at Kaori. Yue had noticed that

Kaori was tormenting her heart as she felt an inferiority complex. Therefore, this time that became the first Great Labyrinth challenge for Kaori, possibly she thought about if she would run home failing. Of course, she had no intention to comfort the other party who had proclaimed a declaration of war to her. If she drew back here, it as just fine if she declared victory when she considered the extent of it.

However, it seemed that Kaori had gotten back on her feet, or rather, there was even an atmosphere of determination being made since before. She was anxious about what had happened.

"……That's right. From Hajime-kun as well, I was told that doing so sooner was better. But, the various differences among other things with Yue…… I will show them now."

"……Did you become defiant?"

"Indeed it might be called that. Or perhaps I should say, although I came along with you all becoming defiant from the start, showing the difference, it was surely only forgotten. I showed you a shameful place."

"……Although it would be fine if you gave up as you were."

"Fufu, are you scared? To compete together?"

"……Don't get carried way by the rhythm. Troublemaker."

"That, it was said also by Hajime-kun. ……I, do I have a constitution to make trouble like that I wonder……?"

To Yue's sharp words, Kaori's face stiffened. Though she felt a little down being called a troublemaker similarly by both her rival in love and the one she loved, she immediately pulled herself together. Incidentally, actually Yue as well, or perhaps you should say Hajime

and the others, because everyone comparatively has a constitution to make trouble, though the words surely boomeranged considerably, the self-consciousness of it was not in Yue.

“Well, although it might be as Yue says……because I am at least Hajime-kun’s ‘Importance’, I decided to aim at ‘Special’ doing my best. Whatever anyone might say, right?”

“……I see. In that case I will accept your challenge the same as before.”

“Yes! Ah, even so, I don’t hate Yue, you know? A fighting friend or something like that, that sort of thing was yearned for just a little.”

“……Friends? Kaori and I are?”

“That’s right, friends. In Japan, there is something like a person who represents friend writing rival. In that case, isn’t it fine to read friend by writing love rival too?”

“……Japan…… Hajime’s birthplace…… It is a more mysterious country the more I hear about it. But…… I think it is a good sense.”

“Right. Ufufu, that’s why, please take care of me after this too?”

“……N.”

Though Yue and Kaori were emitting an atmosphere of good feelings somewhat, at the side, Hajime who heard the two people’s conversation was terribly uncomfortable. It was a feeling like a young man alone even inappropriately slipping into the midst of girls that were making girls talk. And, such things as Kaori knowing the words of a certain end of the century person called strong, although it cannot be helped wanting to tsukkomi because Yue’s return was the words of a certain cardboard box loving snake, he controlled himself

because he read the mood.

Hajime and the others who arrived at the altar set foot on the magic formation with everybody. Going by the usual, it carefully examined the inside of their minds, and their memories were read. However, it was not just that this time, it was like looking at what the other people experienced at the same time. In other words, what Yue and the others experienced was shared with Hajime and Kaori too.

Somehow or other, it seemed that Yue and the others finally arrived at an abandoned metropolis that should even be called an undersea city in a huge underground space. Thereupon, the space warped the same as with Hajime and Kaori, and it was like war came in the metropolitan area with the armies of two countries. Because, that metropolis seemed that it was a place being invaded by the army of the Majin tribe in the human capital, and in the end, it seemed they were attacked from both the same as Hajime and Kaori.

There was a huge architecture that appeared to be the royal castle in the interior of the capital, and Yue and the others who pushed on while kicking about the armies heard the speech of the leaders in the invaded royal castle.

By all means, because the incident where the Majin tribe destroyed a human village was the impetus, although the humans' country that made this metropolis the capital city began a war with the Majin tribe side, actually, that was like a conspiracy of the human side that did not hope for peace and desired the Majin tribe's extermination. By the time it was noticed, the war that was already getting out of hand expanded, and finally it had become a situation where the united human side had the tables turned on them and was invaded until the royal

capital….. It seemed that was the situation.

And, the person plotted that conspiracy, it seemed it was the high priest of the Light Faith Church that was deeply connected with the country, and this Light Faith Church apparently was the predecessor of the Sacred Faith Church. Furthermore, they appeared to be violently cornered. As though they were entreating a deity in troubled times, they tried to obtain the support of God offering sacrifices. As a result, several hundred human women and children were gathered from the metropolitan area, and it became a ghastly situation of a mass killing being done in the church's cathedral.

Even Yue and the others, when they saw that scene it seemed to be quite intense as expected. Because the confirmation of memories by the magic formation compelled them to remember, it made their faces pale. Especially, Shia seemed like she would vomit at any time.

Finally the confirmation of memories ended, and everyone seemed to have been recognized as someone who had captured it safely. The new Age of Gods magic was etched within Hajime's and the others' minds.

"Was this magic here? ……Wasn't it end to end of the continent? Damn Liberators."

"……Found it, 'power of regeneration'."

Hajime breathed out abusive language. That was because the Age of Gods magic of Merujine Undersea Ruins that they obtained was Reproduction magic.

He remembered the wording of the lithography that was under the Great Tree of Hartsina Sea of Trees. He was certain that it was written that the "power of regeneration" was necessary before advancing. In other words, to capture the Great Labyrinth that was at the end of the east, it would not be obtained if you did not go until the end of the west, and it was absurdly

troublesome for a person who had arrived at Hartsina Sea of Trees first. Though it was still better since Hajime and the others possessed the means of high speed movement with the magic driven vehicles.

When Hajime puckered his eyebrows at the repulsiveness of the Liberators, and simultaneously with the magic formation's light paling, a parallelepiped came out from the floor and approached. It seemed like a small altar. When thinking that the altar shone faintly, in the next moment the light took the shape of a human form. Somehow or other, it seemed to be a message left behind similarly with Oscar Orcus.

The human form clearly changed into an outline gradually, and it became a single woman. The girl who sat on the altar was wearing something like a white one piece dress that became loose, and she possessed fan shaped ears and long, emerald green hair. It seemed that the Liberators' one person Meiru Merujine was a woman who was related to the Sea Tribe.

She, the same as Oscar, told the truth of the Liberators after she introduced herself. She seemed to be a gentle woman, wearing a kind atmosphere even while carrying grief. Before long when she finished the same talk as what Oscar had reported, she spoke words at the end.

"……Please, do not cling to God. Do not rely on it. Do not get used to things that are given. Struggle for the sake of grabbing hold of and taking it. Decide by your own will, and advance ahead by your own feet. Any difficult problem, the answer is always within you. It is only within you. Do not be misled by the sweet answer that God deludes you with. Under free will for sure, there is happiness. To you, I am praying that a rain of happiness pours down on you."

Finishing it so, Meiru Merujine vanished, becoming faint

light again. Immediately afterward, a small magic formation shone as it appeared in the place where she had sat, and when the light settled down, a coin where the crest of Merujine was etched was placed there.

“The number of proofs is four, Hajime-san. With this, we are surely able to challenge the Sea of Trees Labyrinth too. I wonder how Father and the others are doing～?”

Shia was quick to think about her family and hometown that she really missed. However, because what came to mind was her father and the others going “Hyahha-!”, she dispersed that scene by shaking her head. As Hajime put away the coin of proof in the Treasure Warehouse, he recalled the Haulia going “Hyahaa-!” the same as Shia, and drove out the scene by shaking his head.

And, just as the proof was put away, the temple began rumbling. And then, the ocean water of the surroundings suddenly began to raise the water level.

“Uo!? Tch, forced expulsion, huh? Everyone, hold on!”

“……N.”

“Wahwah, it’s too unreasonable!”

“It’s like Raisen Great Labyrinth, no mooore～.”

“Water torture…… is being done.”

To the sea water that terrifically increased in force, Hajime and the others who did not even have time to take out and board the submarine were submerged in the blink of an eye. Right away, they were again individually no match for the draining, and everyone firmly grabbed on each others’ clothes and equipped a compressed oxygen cylinder in their mouths that was taken out from the Treasure Warehouse.

And then, immediately after that, the ceiling part opened like the shortcut of Guryuen Conflagration Mountain, and ocean water poured in with violent force. Hajime and the

others also, flowing into the shaft, were blown away to the upper regions by the violent force like being pushed out in a water fountain from below.

Perhaps, though it might be the shortcut of Merujine Undersea Ruins, different from the Meiru Merujine with an atmosphere such as a kind onee-san being gentle, it was an absurdly violent shortcut. Furthermore, it was like compulsion. Unexpectedly, she might have been an extreme person.

Hajime and the others who were forced up finally noticed that overhead was a dead end. However, the moment they collided with it, the ceiling part slid again, and they were thrown out into the vast sea vigorously outside of the ruins. Hajime was convinced. Meiru Merujine was absolutely an extremely sketchy character contrary to her appearance.

Hajime and the others who were thrown out in the sea hurriedly took out the submarine from the Treasure Warehouse. And then, though they tried to board it from the hatch, that plan was obstructed. Mostly, because of an opponent they did not want to meet.

Zubaaaaaaaa!!!

A semi-transparent tentacle passed before their eyes with terrific force, and the submarine was sent flying.

[Yue.]

[Frozen Coffin!]

In the gaze that Hajime turned ahead, although it was a seemingly fairy-like modeling, making everything melt, it was the worst, brutal creature that regenerates infinitely – the huge clione. While grinding his teeth at the thing that appeared especially after the capture was finished, Hajime called out to Yue by invoking Telepathy.

The huge clione again shot a countless number of

tentacles with a violent force like they were not resisted by the water. On the other hand, Yue froze the surrounding ocean water in a spherical shape by harmonizing in response to Hajime's call, and formed a barrier of ice.

The barrier of ice was mightily blown away in the sea by the force of the tentacles that hit directly with Hajime and the others inside. Everyone was made to shake within the barrier at the violent impact.

[What should we do!? Goshujin-sama!]

To Tio who communicated by using the telepathy gem, Hajime answered.

[Everybody aim at the sea. We'll be tortured to death underwater. I'll buy us time!]

Hajime remotely manipulated the submarine by operating the ring type induction stone while saying so. From behind them, the submarine that should have been blown away and sunk plunged forward with extreme speed, and evaded the countless tentacles that came to attack while wrenching the hull. And then it shot a countless number of torpedoes from the bottom of the ship.

The number of torpedoes that could be shot all at once was twelve. If one thinks about it normally it would be plenty of destructive power. However, Hajime, judging that the situation would gradually get worse if he did not make a certain chance here, did not loosen his hand and shot all of the torpedoes consecutively that were loaded on the submarine. Making it navigate like making the hull slip sideways, he made a circle with the huge clione in the center. While implementing impossible movement if it was an ordinary ship, the number of torpedoes that were fired successively were 48 in general.

Those that rushed while drawing a line of bubbles

brought violent destruction, directly hitting the huge clione without varying their aim.

Doou! Doou! Doou! Doou!

Such muted impact sounds reverberated, and the ocean water rose and swelled like it had expanded. From the sea, if one were to look above the huge clione, the sea level would instantaneously rise, and next they would have observed an enormous column of water spout.

Hajime and the others tried to surface by manipulating the water current immediately after all of the torpedoes exploded. However much it looked like a monster that even possessed regenerative power, it should have bought some time for a little while. However, the huge clione's nonsensicalness seemed to have easily exceeded their predictions.

[Yue, above!]

[Tsk… no good, I won't make it!]

A semi-transparent jelly was drifting above Hajime and the others who were trying to surface while recovering the remote controlled submarine, and it became a clione of three meter size when it gathered and solidified in several blinks. And then, when it opened its large head with a "Gapa!", it swallowed the barrier of ice as it was. Naturally, Hajime and the others were in the clione's belly together with the barrier.

[Shit, the regeneration is too fast!]

[It looked like it regenerated from a tentacle that was torn off!]

[This is bad, Hajime-san. The surroundings are full of jelly!]

Apparently, it was not just the tentacle that was torn off, the semi-transparent jelly seemed to have been distributed here and there by getting on the ocean

current from the beginning.

[……Hajime. There is not much to maintain it! I can't reinforce it because there is no ocean water in the belly!]

[Tch, everyone prepare for impact!]

Yue frantically resisted the barrier of ice melting with terrific force. Hajime, while strengthening its defensive power by cladding the barrier with Vajra, took out a large quantity of rockets and torpedoes from the Treasure Warehouse outside of the barrier, namely, in the belly of the clione.

Once more, the clione's body exploded and scattered together with a thunderous roar. Because it began to melt even with Vajra in a short time, even Hajime and the others who bathed in the shock of the nearby explosion were grandly blown away, and the barrier of ice was also smashed.

They were thrown out into the sea. Hajime remotely controlled and moved the submarine in the sea as he caught Kaori and Shia who could not directly fight underwater.

However, this time the submarine was caught. One part of the huge clione had clung to the ship's bottom before anyone was aware and opened a hole in it. In the gap where the cruising speed dropped as ocean water flowed into the interior of the ship, the surrounding semi-transparent jelly that had been scattered gathered in one go and wrapped up the submarine.

Furthermore, Hajime and the others noticed when they were surfacing that a large amount of semi-transparent jelly was expanding to cover overhead of them. Judging by the huge clione's unusual recovery speed, it was not possible to break through in a halfhearted manner.

While spewing abusive language in his mind at his prided

submarine being melted, Hajime called out to Yue with telepathy.

[Yue. I'll rely on you for Spatial Piercing]

[……It will take forty seconds.]

[Hindrances will not be done. To escape from the sea, we have no choice but that.]

[N…… Leave it to me.]

Yue closed her eyes to concentrate and did not move. Kaori and Shia clung to her so that she did not get washed away by the current. The Spatial Piercing that Yue was attempting to use was one of the Space magics that was the Age of Gods magic acquired in Guryuen Conflagration Mountain. Making a hole in a point of two spaces, the space of the two spots were connected. In short, it was magic that made a warp gate. Still, because it hasn't been long since it was learned, being used by Yue it will take that much time.

The tentacles that came attacking, Tio somehow mowed them down with a rapid fire of reduced version breath. However, since the breath's magic power consumption is intense, and since the power and range fall considerably underwater, it was difficult to hit the tentacles because of the straight line attack and the annihilation power was weak. It will likely break through without being held for even several more seconds.

Hajime, taking out ores successively from the Treasure Warehouse, proceeded to continuously use Rensei, and like the barrier of ice that Yue formed not long ago, formed a physical barrier in the shape of a sphere.

[Goshujin-sama! It has already broken through!]

[I was able to do it, so everyone get in!]

The metallic barrier sufficient enough to take in five people was completed, and simultaneously with Tio

getting into it last the hole was closed as it became a perfect metal sphere. Furthermore, that metal sphere was covered in red magical power. It was strengthened by Vajra. Tentatively, because gravity stones were also included, it would not keep sinking as well.

Immediately after that, the tentacles rushed the metal sphere, and began to wrap it up in one go.

The semi-transparent jelly that melts even magic power itself immediately destroyed and consumed the Vajra. And then, even the surface of the metal sphere was melted in a moment. However, when thinking that red sparks ran on the metal sphere, metal swelled from the melted edges, and the protective wall was just barely maintained.

That was because Hajime continued to constantly use Rensei from within. Fortunately, there was a kind of ore that was contained within the Treasure Warehouse to a literally rotting degree. Repeated Rensei seriously as he opposed the rate of melting, and then, the moment he impatiently waited for finally came.

[Spatial Piercing!]

Yue's spatial transference magic was invoked. Within the metal sphere, a shining membrane of an elliptical shape was completed in the immediate vicinity of Hajime and the others. It was the gate that connected space.

[Everybody jump in!]

In accordance with the command of Hajime who continued to use Rensei by applying his hand to the metal sphere, everyone jumped into the gate all at once. Hajime also jumped in last. After Hajime passed through it, the gate immediately terminated, and several seconds later a countless number of tentacles pierced the metal sphere and melted it.

Hajime and the others who passed through the gate were attacked by a terrible floating sensation. It was because the movement done before was to the sky. To be separated from the sea even a little, Yue had established the exit one hundred meters in the sky.

Immediately Tio used Dragonification and floated as she placed Hajime and the others on her back. On Tio's back Yue started to crumble down, and Kaori and Shia supported her from the sides. It was a state of magical power completely drying up. Hurriedly, she replenished it taking out magical power from the magic crystal stones.

"Yue, you saved us. As expected of you. Space transference is proportionate in difficulty."

"……Haa haa, n. I did my best. But, it's still not a level for combat."

As Yue said, the handling of Space magic was difficult to the extent that it could not be compared with Gravity magic, and in the view of Yue it was still not at a level where it could be used in actual fighting. Much time is taken to construct the magic formation image by means of Imagination Composition, and the magical power efficiency is also still bad, as even though they made a spatial transition of one hundred meters, it was to an extent that it consumed magical power of two times that of superlative magic.

Nevertheless, because of Yue being skilled she was able to attain it and put it to use in a short period, and their escape was able to be done. Admiration was sent freely from Kaori and the others too, and to a certain extent, Yue who blushed was embarrassed.

Though everyone loosened their faces at the situation, the next moment, their expressions became frozen.

Doogooooooooo!!!

Zabaaaaaaaa!!!

Together with such a roaring sound, suddenly a huge tsunami swept down on them from the back of Hajime and the others. No, even calling it huge is presumptuous. Already there was a wall and the sky. The tsunami that seemed to easily exceed five hundred meters in height came to attack while raising wave crests in the distant sky where Tio flew about one hundred meters high in the sky. And the diameter seemed to be about one kilometer.

“Tsk, Tio!”

[Acknowledged!]

Tio recovered herself at Hajime’s shout, and accelerated in one go as she fluttered her wings. There was no escape anyway. Space transition would not be in time. If it was, there was nothing to think about but “To the other side”! She flew with a high speed that seemed to rival the time she escaped from Guryuen Conflagration Mountain.

“–Restraining Seal, Beyond Sage!”

“Beyond Sage.”

Kaori produced a rope of light that connected everyone to prepare for when they would be swallowed, while at the same time she expanded high grade defensive magic together with Yue. Shia gave a warning the next instant as she widened her eyes when concentrating on something.

“Tio-san, be careful! That is inside the tsunami! Tentacles are coming!”

She seemed to have reported the scene that she saw with her characteristic magic Foresight’s derivation Future Assumption. Tio, without even confirming Shia’s words, twisted her body instantaneously. Right afterward, countless tentacles extended from the tsunami and pierced the space where Tio was until now immediately.

She was able to avoid them successfully. However, the difference with the tsunami had been shortened because of that reason. The tentacles that still came attacking, though Hajime intercepted and burned them to ashes with a flamethrower……

“Damn it! Everyone get together!”

Hajime who was on Tio’s back covered Yue, Shia, and Kaori like he was hugging them, and then, right after that, the huge tsunami that should even be called a natural disaster swallowed them.

Because there was the Beyond Sage of the pair of Yue and Kaori, though they did not receive the impact of the tsunami directly, even so they were unreasonably tossed around by the fierce torrent and were sent back into the sea.

One piece of the Beyond Sage was completely smashed, and the other piece was already cracked. Supposing if they had not expanded anything but one piece, then at about this time they might have gone to a watery grave. Hajime and the others who shook their heads at the shock from being thrown into the sea raised their faces as they made grim expressions again.

“How should I put it, the aimed at prey isn’t let go?”

The huge clione was already in front of Hajime and the others who were protected by Beyond Sage. Furthermore, that figure was becoming even larger, and had already exceeded twenty meters. Was it still insufficient? While gathering semi-transparent jelly from the surroundings, it continued to grow even larger.

“I-it can’t be…… Things like not dying, melting anything, and manipulating even the sea…… What should we do?”

“……Hajime-san. Can you give me a serious kiss? I want to do it with Hajime-san at least at the end.”

“…….Fuu, Goshujin-sama. Me too, I desire a kiss at the end.”

Kaori darkened her expression in despair, and Shia pleaded to Hajime while floating a smile like she was embarrassed. Tio was also the same.

However, the girls who turned their gazes at Hajime shook their bodies with a “Biku”. Because, Hajime’s eye glittered with flames. The glint in his eye was sharp, carrying murderous intent of an insanely thick degree, and he was glaring at the clione that had become huge as he bared his teeth.

Hajime would not do something like giving up. There was not even a tiny bit of such a thought. What was in his head was: what should they do to kill the enemy before their eyes and how could they survive, it was only just that. Confronted with a formidable enemy of an impossible degree, if that was enough to give up, Hajime would not be standing in this place now. He surely would have perished in the abyss a long time ago.

And, understanding that, surely because they had escaped the verge of death in the abyss together, Yue also still frantically worked out her thoughts without carrying the likes of resignation at all.

At the eyes of Hajime that glittered, Kaori, Shia, and Tio, though they stiffened as they were and gazed at him with expressions that were engrossed for a little while like their hearts had been stolen, they regained their consciousness because the huge clione commenced its attack finally becoming a thirty meter class.

Panicking, Kaori formed Beyond Sage over again. Shia grasped for possibilities of victory with Future Assumption. Tio fired breath. In the girls’ eyes, there was no color of giving up anymore. The likes of a brave woman, if that was not a person who should be at

Hajime's side, it was because it was thought so.

Yue also, although she had not thought of a plan to to break the deadlock yet, for now she was going to crush both offense and defense for the sake of surviving.

Hajime did not do anything in particular, and just intently worked out his thoughts. In the given time that Yue and the others earned, he continued to search for a path to victory with high speed thoughts while invoking Lightspeed. He ordered himself to recall all of the information there was now. With terrific force within Hajime's brain, the scenes until now flashed back.

And then, he remembered. He and the others had once gotten away from the huge clione. That changed into a question. "Although so much power exists, why did it overlook us once?" At that time, what differed with the present fight? ……That was…

"We're not using fire much."

Right, last time Tio and Yue grandly used magic of the fire system with reckless abandon. That time, the tentacles became ash, and should not have been used to regenerate.

Hajime found hope there. Though it was a guess without positive proof, probably, the regeneration of the clione was not infinite. The semi-transparent jelly that composed its body and appeared to be equal to infinite existed in mass quantities.

Also, it appeared likely that it was able to even create it on its own just by seeing the situation until now. Though, if it were annihilated in one go, it might need time to replace it. Therefore, last time because it replaced a large quantity of its annihilated body, it prioritized regeneration over pursuit, and Hajime and the others seemed to have been able to escape.

In that case, it was the same. It was fine if they could annihilate it faster that it could create or regenerate the semi-transparent jelly that composed the clione. However, this place was in the sea. It was sufficient to say that fire magic could not be used the most effectively as one might think. Though Tio's breath is high temperature, it did not seem to be able to finish annihilating it. There was no method. There were no stored arms that could annihilate it. In that case……

"It's just fine if I make it."

Hajime, taking out torpedoes and ore successively from the Treasure Warehouse, began to produce something with terrific force for some reason.

"……Hajime? Did you think of something?"

"Yeah. To use fire in the sea there's no choice but this. It should defeat it if it goes smoothly."

"Hajime-kun, is that true!?"

"As expected of Hajime-san! I believed in you from the beginning!"

"……Shia, you, didn't you solicit a kiss as you gave up in the beginning……? No, that aside, that's our Goshujin-sama!"

"However, it will take time. You all, I'll leave it to you."

At Hajime who said so while smiling fearlessly as he lifted his lips, Kaori, Shia, and Tio immediately nodded their heads strongly, and even more, they confronted the huge clione increasing their concentration.

Hajime expanded his perception ability to the maximum using Lightspeed, and furthermore he demonstrated concentration power that exceeded the limit by using Limit Break at the same time too as he poured all of his power into the weapon creation.

One, though he completed another one, the mass

production in one go does not go like the bullets whose degree of difficulty to create is extremely high. Nevertheless, when using them sporadically, the huge clione might finish regenerating or creating the semi-transparent jelly. The situation would gradually get worse if it became so. If he was going to do it in, he should do it in instantly. While wearing red magical power — the proof of Limit Break, Hajime's frantic Rensei was repeated.

However, reality is heartless. As far as the huge clione is concerned in the sea was a place of its overwhelming advantage, and even with Yue and the others of the cheat group doing it, they did not seem able to rival it for long.

Though Yue, Kaori, Shia, and Tio were desperately standing firm with expressions that seemed strained, they did not seem to be able to hold out until the preparation was complete.

[Three minutes, the end at most, if there is three minutes!]

While invoking telepathy instinctively, Hajime shouted so. Finally, the huge clione whose fierce attacks they could not contain approached before their eyes, and swept down to swallow Hajime and the others as its head split with a Gapa!

Hajime reluctantly decided to fire even though it was only as much as he was able to now to try to survive this moment.

But, at that moment, neither Yue, Shia, Tio, nor Kaori either, it was a refined old man's voice that responded to Hajime's shout with telepathy.

[Yo, Ha-bou. Doesn't it seem dangerous? Occhan will help you out.]

[-!? T-this voice, it can't be, Li-san?]

[Yeah. Ha-bou's friend, it's Li-san.]

Yes, having appeared, the one who had been captured in Fyuren's aquarium before, it was the human faced fish demon Lieman who Hajime called Li-san. Hajime, when he looked at the surroundings as he widened his eyes in surprise, suddenly a huge silver shadow rammed a hit into the huge clione's body from the side. The huge clione that was in a posture of just being about to prey upon them as it opened its mouth was blown away as it received the perfect surprise attack, and was pushed away.

In that space, the human faced fish that was certainly remembered swam to the immediate vicinity of the Beyond Sage. At the abrupt situation, Yue and the others also were completely not able to follow. Seeing Lieman's figure, Yue and Tio stared in wonder, Shia widened her eyes in surprise with "That time!", and arriving at Kaori, she screamed with a "Hii!?"

[Was Shia jou-chan also in good health?]

"Fue!? Um, y-yes! I'm healthy."

[That is splendid. Then, Ha-bou, what are you doing lazily? If you had three more minutes, would you be able to deal with the Akujiki somehow? If you have to do it, do it quickly. Do you not have so long?]

[Y-yeah. Although something wasn't understood well, at any rate you saved us. Thank you, Li-san.]

Hajime moved the hand he had stopped at the sudden appearance of Lieman, and resumed the weapon creation in a hurry.

Meanwhile, the huge silver shadow, suicide attacking the huge clione, bought time doing an exchanging of attacks. Somehow or other, the silver shadow's true identity seemed to be a group of fish. They were not even demons

or the like and were just fish. Though they were just fish, tens of thousands, or, if the number equaled several hundreds of thousands, it seemed that even a monster opponent was able to be held off. Because they decreased in number by the staggering force, certainly, they did not seem able to keep it up for long.

Why was Lieman here? Shia, who was put out ahead forcibly as the representative because she seemed to be an acquaintance, asked that question.

[U-um, Li-san? Is that fine? Uh, what in the world is going on?]

[Hmph, it isn't anything in particular. As I was properly hanging around this area, a telepathic communication was heard accompanied by a huge, familiar magical power. What I saw when I rushed over, wasn't it Ha-bou being attacked by the Akujiki? Though there were a lot of questions, it was my friend's crisis. It is the shame of a man to not do anything.]

"Uh, that group of fish…… is the Akujiki in it?"

[The Akujiki is that thing. Long ago, a monster that haunted the sea from ancient times… no, that fellow is a natural disaster. It could also be called an ancestor of demons. That crowd of fish is being guided by my ability. To our species that uses telepathy, the ability is possessed to manipulate the normal sea creatures to a certain extent.]

A surprising fact came to light. The human faced fish Lieman seemed to have been a fish user. The group of fish was almost destroyed in the timing that Lieman's conversation ended, and the huge clione again attacked while opening its mouth as it went toward Hajime and the others.

However, the time that was earned by the noble sacrifice…… was precisely three minutes.

A group of larger than normal torpedoes were spread out in the surroundings of the Beyond Sage that enclosed Hajime and the others. The number was roughly 120. And, rings of the same number floated in the surroundings of Hajime who smiled fearlessly.

When Hajime activated the induction stone on hand, the group of torpedoes were shot all at once. 120 torpedoes rushed towards the huge clione that had opened its mouth at high speed while drawing a line of bubbles. However, only the torpedoes, because they would just scatter the body of the huge clione even if they exploded, there would not be substantial damage either and it seemed that it would immediately regenerate.

The huge clione attempted to intercept the group of torpedoes, sending out a large number of tentacles as it was upset at them becoming a hindrance to its meal, and everyone stared ahead wondering what they should do. Hajime who had exceeded the limit manipulated the torpedoes with the very limit of his concentration power and barely evaded them.

“Are you not going to avoid them? Then, I’ll let you eat to your heart’s content.”

Hajime’s mutter resounded. The huge clione that was previously the Akujiki, at the reason that it was able to melt anything, Hajime thought that might have been why it did not avoid the attack.

And then, the expectation was correct. The group of torpedoes that had finished dodging the barrage of tentacles directly hit and pierced into the huge clione’s whole body uniformly without it even showing an attitude of avoiding them.

However, an explosion did not happen. Buried in the huge clione’s body, although they were melting there was not an explosion of even one shot. The huge clione that

had embedded the group of black torpedoes throughout its body was in a state like a flecked pattern was made as if poison had invaded the previous position.

Hajime, before the group of torpedoes completely melted, carried out the next move. He took out a massive quantity of black liquid into the empty space from the Treasure Warehouse. It was the tar that was made from liquified Flamme ore. To the inside of the surrounding floating rings, it was poured there like a waterfall.

Then at the same time, the whole body of the huge clione began to be stained black. As though, like water soaking into paper and changing its color all at once, the black liquid was encroaching on the semi-transparent, huge clione. The identity was the tar of liquefied Flamme ore that Hajime had poured into the surrounding rings.

These rings and the group of torpedoes, all of them were connected by a small gate. What passed through the inside of the ring jumped through space and arrived at the same ring used as an exit that had been built into the inside of the torpedoes. In other words, the torpedoes were not explosives, they were things to carry the rings, and at the same time, they were also a physical barrier of the rings while sending in the tar.

Naturally, though the tar itself was also melted, because of the total of 120 gates, the melting speed of the large quantity of tar that poured in without pause could not catch up to the encroachment of its whole body by the tar.

In an instant, the huge clione, though it tried to escape the encroachment by separating its body, Yue and the others did not allow it. The separation was thoroughly hindered with a barrier, freezing, and breath. Still, Yue's gate was unable to be used because she was not able to open the gate on a pinpoint on a moving target yet. To be

able to do it, two established points of space just had to be connected.

The huge clione, because it became serious, though it had been on the verge of finishing off Hajime and the others by a war potential with a volume of the maximum class done by gathering the semi-transparent jelly of the surroundings, now it had backfired. The tar that Hajime poured into it finished dyeing the huge clione black without leaving anything in the end.

Hajime, as he curved his mouth, he pierced the huge clione with fiery, glittering eyes. In his hand a tiny ember was being held.

“Burn in hellfire from inside of the body and die.”

The ember that was flicked by Hajime’s thumb, while drawing an arc, it hit directly like it was being inhaled in one of the tars that was pouring down. At that moment, a scorching heat of 3000 degrees Celsius surged and spread through the gate instantly.

Not long ago, it was dyed black, and the huge clione had tried to melt the tar inside its body with an atmosphere that it felt desperation somewhere, and this time, it had become dyed a scorching red. As Hajime said, from inside of its body, hellfire that was not able to be opposed did not allow even a moment of resistance, and its body was completely burned.

A large, crimson flower that bloomed in the sea finally appeared from inside the body of the huge clione accompanied by the coloring of a name called a mass of bubbles in the sea, and it was destroyed, frying even through the exterior. And then, the super high temperature flames raised a violent steam explosion as they evaporated the ocean water in an instant.

Goobaaaaaaa!!!

A terrific impact surged, and the distant sea burst open like a joke. In the sea that was also still raging, it was a state like a storm was called in. Inside the rough sea, Hajime and the others who let the impact go past them searched for the form of the huge clione beyond the barrier.

Though their gazes went around without negligence in the sea that was calming down moment by moment…… the form of the clione that was like a nightmare was nowhere to be seen. Hajime, though he carefully investigated using the magic eye stone and Farsight, as expected the huge clione's traces were not reflected.

Hajime and the others were convinced. The monster of ancient times — the Akujiki subjugation had been completed here.

"Guh…… Somehow, is it over……?"

The rings that had floated in the surroundings scattered and sank as they lost their power, and the red magical power that covered Hajime's body also quickly dispersed and vanished. At the same time, Hajime who staggered by the side effect of Limit Break went down on one knee inside the barrier of Beyond Sage, and distorted his expression from an intense headache because of overworking.

However, in his eyes that said "I killed it!", great joy overflowed at having survived victoriously.

"……Hajime, are you alright?"

"Hajime-kun, I'll heal you immediately!"

Yue immediately approached Hajime's side and supported his body. Kaori also went to heal Hajime as she chanted recovery magic immediately. Shia and Tio also came to approach at the sides and embraced Hajime.

"You did it! Hajime-san!"

“As expected of Goshujin-sama…… you made a harsh killing scene. I felt chills.”

At Kaori’s healing, while feeling his headache lessen a little at a time, Hajime also loosened his cheeks at his companions that had gathered. While soaking in the reverberations of their victory, when it became peaceful, an old man’s voice who seemed to be a little displeased resounded.

[Yoo, Ha-bou. Please tell me if it’s going to explode. Didn’t you consider if I might die?]

[Ah, Li-san. Sorry. I thought about nothing but what I was killing.]

Apparently, Lieman seemed to have been completely blown away by the last explosion. Because he had used all of his power to kill the huge clione, his consciousness had not been turned toward Lieman. Moreover, the last explosion was not something Hajime had intended. For a bit, Hajime had also been surprised.

[Well, can it not be helped if it was to kill the Akujiki? Whatever was done, it was splendid.]

[If Li-san hadn’t come it would have been seriously terrible. Thank you.]

[You’re welcome. Well, I only stuck to my moral code. Don’t worry about it.]

[You’re an honorable man as usual. As expected of Li-san. I’m thankful too for the coincidence that you were here.]

[Ha-bou, coincidences that have accumulated, isn’t it already called inevitable? That Occhan was able to assist you was also inevitable, and that you survived like this is also an inevitability.]

Hajime loosened his mouth with a “hah” the same with the fish with the old man face that smiled broadly. At the two people who were communicating something to each

other, the female formation in the background were discussing together with whispers.

“……What’s that? Aren’t they excessively communicating something with each other?”

“……Honorable man’s friendship?”

“Hajime-kun…… the friend that he was able to make in the other world is a Seama○? Even in Japan the appearance of him hitting it off with someone to that extent wasn’t seen!”(TN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seaman_%28video_game%29)

“There was such a feeling even before. Girls’ talk can’t help becoming boys’ talk if it’s a guy? Well, though the other party is an old man……”

From themselves, to the intimate atmosphere of Hajime and Lieman of a certain meaning, when Yue and the others turned complex expressions towards them without either trembling or bewilderment attached, the two people’s conversation also seemed to have just ended.

[Then, Occhan is already going. Ha-bou. Let us meet again if fate allows.]

[Yeah. Li-san also take care.]

With one mutual nod, Lieman turned back. However, when looking back as he advanced a little, he talked to Shia.

[Jou-chan. There seems to be many rivals, but do your best. When you are able to have children, let’s have them play with my children sometime. I will introduce my wife also. See you.]

When leaving only those words, without looking back this time, he disappeared into the ocean as he was.

Those that remained behind……

“”””””You were married—!!?”””””””

It was a grand tsukkomi of such a Hajime and company. Though he put on the airs of a wanderer, when thinking that he possessed a family, nothing but a normal useless old man was seen. For awhile, their tsukkomi echoed in the ocean.

Chapter 96 - Oath With The Daughter

“Papa-! It’s morning-! Wake up-!”

At a corner of the maritime town Erisen, an infant’s voice resounded in the second floor of a certain house. The time, passing through the early morning slowly, was around when one started to feel the warmth of the day. From the window, like forecasting that it will become good weather today as well, the morning sun streamed in brilliantly.

Dosun!

“Aa～?”

It was Hajime who was fast asleep in bed that was being shined on by such a morning sun. And, calling such a Hajime Papa was Myuu who came to wake him up with an energetic voice.

Myuu, when determining the magnificent leap that does not make the weight felt just before the bed, the landing of a ten point perfect score was determined on the belly of Hajime who was her Papa as it was. Of course, it was not from her feet. It was a form that became her straddling him.

Although she was still a four year old child, the body weight was already around 15-6 kilograms. If such a weight jumps on the abdomen with added force, a normal person should even let out a groan, but naturally Hajime does not feel any kind of pain. Nevertheless, a sleepy groan did come out because of the forced way he was woken up.

“Papa, get up. It’s morning. Good morning.”

“……Aah, Myuu? Morning. Please stop *pechipechi*-ing

since I'm up."

Was she happy that Hajime had woken up? While showing a bright smile, Myuu drummed on Hajime's face with *pechipechi* sounds with hands like tiny red leaves. Hajime, when holding Myuu as he raised his upper body while doing a morning greeting, he combed her emerald green hair gently. At Myuu who narrowed her eyes like it felt good, Hajime's cheeks also loosened.

"……N……au……Hajime? Myuu?"

Inside such a heartwarming atmosphere, all of a sudden, a voice that made one feel seductiveness somewhere resounded. Hajime, when turning the sheets a little as he shifted his attention that way, the sleepy figure of a beautiful girl rubbing her eyes with the back of her curled up hand like a cat was there.

Long blonde hair hung down in waves that was not bed hair at all even though she had been lying down, and it sparkled because of the morning sun pouring in from the window, causing her to blink her crimson eyes that were the same as red spinel. Because she was not wearing clothes the same as Hajime, with her pure white skin without a single blemish, the pair of hills that could be seen from the gaps of her hair that hung down the front made one feel seductiveness together with loveliness coupled with the sound of her voice.

"How come Papa and Yue-oneechan are always naked?"

Myuu's innocent question meant "the time they got up in the morning" to the utmost. By no means did it mean that the pair were nudists.

And, seeming to wonder, "Maybe they don't have pajamas?", Myuu looked alternately at Hajime and Yue with eyes that were possibly seeing someone a little pitiable. To the childishly pure question, with the likes of "That is, you, because clothes are obstructive?", Hajime,

who must not have even been able to do a response that was mistaken for sexual harassment, requested Yue to help him with a slightly troubled expression.

In her consciousness that cleared up gradually, Yue who guessed Hajime's distress returned an adult's template to the child's innocent question.

"……Myuu will also come to understand it if you become even bigger."

"You understand when you become bigger?"

"……N, you understand."

To Myuu who tilts her head, Yue avoided clearly answering by force. Myuu's sex education was left to Remia who was her mother. However, Myuu who tilted her head to the side with an expression like she was not quite able to agree with an "U～n", when looking back slowly, she let out an innocent question again while staring at a certain spot, and cornered mainly Hajime.

"Papa also, do you know why this place became big? But, Myuu doesn't have this. Myuu doesn't understand?"

Saying so, at a certain place where the characteristic morning physiological phenomenon was caused, Myuu started to drum on it with her hands going *peshipeshi*. Although it was not with a significant power, Hajime, who shook at the impact on his delicate place, fixed how he held Myuu in a hurry to separate her as much as possible from "that".

"Myuu, don't touch that. Listen. It's natural for Myuu who is a girl to not have it. It's fine if you don't worry about it. Another ten years, no, twenty years, better yet your whole life, it's something you don't have to be concerned with no matter what."

Hajime said something foolish with an extremely serious face. Myuu nodded her head with a *kokuri* because it

was something said by her beloved Papa even while floating “?” in her mind. Making a somehow satisfied expression at that, Hajime again untangled Myuu’s hair by combing it with his hand. Myuu also, like her questions from just now were forgotten, started to concentrate on being satisfied by that gentle feeling.

To such a Hajime, a gaze was turned towards him like feeling amused somewhere from Yue who was next to him. In those eyes, “Overprotective”, “Energetic because of the morning”, and “One advantage because of the morning?”, such feelings of this or that seemed to be contained in them.

Hajime faced the other way at that. Inside the warmth that increased a little at a time because of the light of day, that heartwarming scene continued until Remia and Kaori and the others, who fretted at the situation where Myuu did not come to wake them up, came crowding into it.

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Hajime and the others, capturing Merujine Undersea Ruins, had returned to Erisen by getting on the back of Tio who used Dragonification because they had lost the submarine, and again six days had passed since they had supplied topics to the town. Since the day they had returned, Hajime and the others had been indebted to the house of Remia and Myuu throughout.

The town called Erisen was a floating island of intertwined wood with a huge population. Since the vast sea itself becomes an infinite plot of land, the whole town became an appearance where there is basically space made in the architecture and in the streets. Remia’s and Myuu’s house also, the largeness of it was more than enough for a house with two people living in it, and it was a comfortable living space to the extent that even
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with the five people of Hajime and the others staying there they did not even feel any inconvenience.

Thereupon they set aside time to replenish their equipment and master the Age of Gods magic that they had obtained. Though half of it was a vacation mood because Erisen had perfected seafood cooking, the wind and waves were also pleasant, and the location was very comfortable.

But, nevertheless, they felt that the rest was over a little on staying the sixth day. The reason, it goes without saying, was Myuu. It was not possible to take Myuu along on the journey beyond this point. A four year old girl without even any sort of power, it was absurd to take her along to the Great Labyrinth of the far east.

Not to mention that the two Great Labyrinths excluding Hartsina Sea of Trees were in even more troublesome locations. One was in the Majin tribe's territory, the Freezing Cave of Schnee Snow Field. And the other one was surely that whatever Kamiyama. For either of them, they would need to go into the heart of a great power. To such a location, they were absolutely unable to take Myuu along.

Because of that, though they should bid farewell to this town, was it guessed somehow? When Hajime and the others tried to start that conversation, Myuu always went into ultra spoiled child mode, and they could not easily start talking because she invoked "Certain kill! Little Girl, Petition of Silence!" Eventually, dragging on the Age of Gods magic's training and the new equipment's completion, they stayed even the sixth day even though it was a made up excuse.

"Even so, if I don't make reasonable departure……haa, what should I say to Myuu……will she cry, I wonder? Her crying……haa, it's depressing."

Hajime, while preparing some equipment with Rensei as he sat on the pier, muttered a soliloquy in seeming melancholy. The time when he had just exited from hell, although he thought that all of this world was inconsequential, now he was racking his brains at one farewell with a small child. At such a present state, in his mind, Hajime held complex feelings.

“I blame you, Sensei……”

To discard everything of this world, the thinking that did not dislike all of the sacrifices for the sake of just his objective had completely vanished, and Hajime used abusive language remembering his former teacher who was the impetus that led him to carrying such thoughts. However, Yue, Shia, Kaori, and Tio in front of his eyes, and seeing the smiling face of Myuu who was playing a game of underwater tag with the girls, the smile he floated on his face was the opposite of his words.

When it was unrelated to him, at that time, if he had abandoned Myuu, or if he had left Ankaji as it was, then if he left Remia alone, and if he quickly separated from Myuu…… surely, the girls might not have those first rate smiling faces.

Even if he discarded them for example, though it was separate from Yue and the others feeling unhappiness and it might not be a cause for their smiles to disappear, but could they possibly compare to those being shown now? That was surely because there was no doubt that the way it was for Hajime until this place was not “the lonely way of life”.

While watching Myuu who was enjoying the irregular game of tag splendidly running from place to place from the incarnations of cheats with all of her power(everyone excluding Myuu was “it”) as she perfectly showed the traits of the Sea-person tribe, again, Hajime let out a sigh.

From between both legs of such a Hajime that were stretched out from the pier, suddenly a person's figure appeared making a splashing sound. Having appeared dripping water from in the sea, it was Remia who was Myuu's mother.

Remia, who had her long, emerald green hair in one loose braid on her back, was wearing a splendidly suggestive, light green bikini. At first when she reunited with Myuu she was considerably haggard, but now, having perfectly regained her previous healthy body because of the recovery effects of the foul play class Reproduction magic, you would not think that she was the mother of a child, no, it was so but she was clad in her former seductiveness.

The man company of the town, all of them aimed at being her second marriage partner, as she was a gentle system beauty, to the extent that one could nod even if there was a strange fan club of the mother and child set. She boasted a splendid figure almost equal with Tio, and the drops of water that ran off the surface of her body were absolutely bewitching.

Such a Remia, who was charming even under normal circumstances, appeared between his thighs suddenly. Hajime, who was racking his brains about Myuu, was inadvertently taken by surprise. Remia, as she supported her body setting her hands on Hajime's lap, she looked up at Hajime from a place that was a considerably dangerous position.

However, in her face was the opposite of the position and the body that emitted seductiveness, and in Remia's kind expression, instead it carried a color like she was worrying about Hajime.

"Thank you very much. Hajime-san."

"What is it all of a sudden? Something like saying

thanks……”

Hajime made an expression like he was doubtful at Remia who stated her gratitude suddenly.

“Ufufu, the person who also worries so much for the sake of the daughter……as her mother I also came to want to say one expression of gratitude.”

“That……was it found out? For the time being, though I was intending to hide it.”

“Ara ara, there wasn’t a person who didn’t know? Yue-san and the others also all seem to be thinking about it…… Myuu was able to meet with really wonderful people.”

As Remia looked back over her shoulder, though Shia had been stripped of her swimsuit by Myuu’s prank, even though they saw her figure chasing Myuu frantically while making a hand bra, she was showing a smile. And, again when turning her gaze to Hajime, this time she opened her mouth with an expression that was a little serious.

“Hajime-san. It’s already enough. Everyone has done more than enough. Therefore, please don’t be worried, and go forward for the sake of the things that you must do.”

“Remia……”

“Meeting with everyone, that child has grown up greatly. Although she only behaved like a spoiled child, she has come to be able to worry about someone other than herself…… That girl understands. That Hajime-san and the others have to go…… although she completely acted like a spoiled child unintentionally because she is still immature, even so, ‘Don’t go,’ was never said, right? That child also knows that it is wrong to detain you all more than this. Therefore……”

“……Is that so? ……If I’m being worried about by a child, it’s not taking care of her……I got it. Tonight, I’ve decided to tell her clearly. Tomorrow, we’ll depart.”

Myuu’s silent appeal, though she didn’t want them to go, he noticed that it was a manifestation of her fear about not wanting to trouble Hajime and the others by saying it, and Hajime, who looked up at the sky as he covered his eyes with one hand, became determined to say farewell. To such a Hajime, Remia again turned a gentle gaze towards him.

“Then, tonight let’s have a feast. Because it’s Hajime-san’s and the others’ farewell party.”

“That’s right…… I’m looking forward to it.”

“Ufufu, yes, please look forward to it, D*e*a*r?”

“No, that way of calling is……”

To Remia who was floating a mischievous smile somewhere, though Hajime started to insert a tsukkomi, because of a voice that contained a chill like a blizzard, it was interrupted like always.

“……Remia……good courage.”

“Remia-san, since when…… There was neither negligence nor a chance.”

“Fumu, by the angle seen, she even seems to be servicing Goshujin-sama…… Exposure play…… nice!”

“Um, Myuu-chan? Onee-chan’s swimsuit, can’t you return it soon? The public gaze from some time ago is……”

Yue and the others who returned to Hajime’s location unnoticed glared at Remia with half closed eyes. “It can’t be, is she aiming at Hajime for a second marriage partner for real?” seemed to be what was making them vigilant. These last few days, it was a sight seen often. The pervert was ignored. The swimsuit stolen by the four year old girl and the half crying rabbit ears were also ignored.

On the other hand, if one were to speak of Remia, who was in a state of being glared at, the appearance of her pulling back was not especially seen because she merely smiled with, “Ara ara, ufufu.” That easy breezy smile, because it hid Remia’s true feelings, the approach that was shown sometimes towards Hajime was difficult to distinguish whether she was being serious or joking. This, is it said to be a widow’s dignity or something……?

If speaking of the Hajime in question, he was captivated by the swimsuit appearance of Yue who was glaring at Remia in a state of crawling on all fours as she raised herself onto the pier. Though he saw her every day, his gaze was attracted at an unconscious level already.

It was a black bikini type. It was splendidly suggestive because it was the type that was tied by a string. The contrast coupled with Yue’s skin’s whiteness was exceedingly lovely. Doing up her hair in a rare twintail, although it made her feel more childish than normal, the gap one felt with the adult-like swimsuit was unbearable for Hajime.

Yue who was hurling sparks with Remia, when she noticed Hajime’s gaze, she spilled a smile seemingly in good humor with a “……Fufu,” because it seemed like she guessed that his heart had been stolen by her, and she approached Hajime as she was on all fours.

However, when she was absolutely not permitted to be far ahead forever, Kaori took Hajime’s arm from the other side. She pressed Hajime’s arm into the cleavage that peeked out from the white bikini with a *munyu*, although she was dyed red up to her ears from embarrassment. Her glance that looked at Hajime with upturned eyes was appealing in silence with “Look at me too?”

Furthermore, Shia from behind leaned on him while

pressing her prided pair of hills onto Hajime's back. Because her swimsuit was still taken by Myuu, she seemed to have the intention to hide her body too. But, for Hajime, besides the first-rate softness, the characteristic feeling of the two that were touching him was a place where he was extremely troubled.

Incidentally, though Tio also displayed a very charming swimsuit appearance, because the feeling was very bad as she started "Haa Haa"-ing in her delusion, Hajime made her cool off her head by force as he attacked with the piece of metal he was holding. That being the case, currently she had become a drowned body.

Like that, to the location of Hajime who was surrounded by by beautiful women and girls, Myuu came rising to the surface from in the sea. Myuu, who appeared like she was cutting in between Hajime and Remia, she jumped at Hajime as she was from the front. To Hajime who caught her in his arms in an instant, Myuu, with "Taken booty!" just hoisted Shia's swimsuit and placed it on Hajime's head. Apparently, it seemed to be a gift from his daughter.

"Mi-Myuu-chan!? Why, such a thing……is!? It can't be…… was it requested by Hajime-san? Re-really! Hajime-san, if my swimsuit was on your mind, if you said so…… as much as you liked……"

"……Hajime, I'll give mine too."

"M-me too! If Hajime-kun wants it…… but because it's embarrassing undressing here…… in the room later, alright?"

"Ara ara, then, me too…… Top or bottom, which one is better? Or else, both of them?"

Placing a woman's swimsuit on his head, a man to whom girls from all sides were presenting swimsuits, Nagumo Hajime.

The water that dripped from Shia's swimsuit with a *potapota* was quite surreal coupled together with Hajime's expression that had stiffened his face. The man company who witnessed that scene were made to drop tears of blood. And, to what extent did rumors spread in the area that day? With a story of, "Be careful of the white haired eye-patch boy. That guy's favorite dish is stripped off swimsuits. He is a pervert that finds supreme delight in wearing them from his head."

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The evening of that day, Hajime and the others informed Myuu of their farewell before dinner. Myuu who heard it grasped the hem of the one piece she wore tightly with both hands with a *gyu*, and earnestly resisted crying. The short silence continued for awhile, and it was Myuu who broke it.

"……We can't meet anymore?"

"……"

It was a question that he was hard pressed to answer. Hajime's goal was to return to Japan which was his birthplace. However, the concrete method was not yet known, and he did not know in what timing or in the shape of how he would return.

Before, Miledi Raisen said to collect all of the Age of Gods magics if he wanted to fulfill his wish. Perhaps it might become a thing where he immediately returned in that timing. Because it seemed that there was no need to come back to Erisen until the end of the journey, possibly, he could not deny the possibility that this would become the final farewell.

"……Papa, will you always stay Myuu's Papa?"

To Hajime who was troubled over how he should answer, Myuu piled up words before listening to the reply.
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Hajime met her gaze directly and firmly grasped both of Myuu's shoulders.

"……Myuu, if that is your wish."

When replying so, Myuu made a smile with a *ni* as she loosened her mouth that had been clenched to resist tears. It was Yue and the others who made a *ha* in their expressions. In some respects it resembled Hajime's expression at a time when he was challenging a difficult fight, and, for an instant, they appeared like a true parent and child.

"Then, take care. And, next time, Myuu is going to go meet Papa."

"Going to meet……Myuu. I'm planning to go very far away. Therefore……"

"But, if Papa can go, then Myuu can go too. After all…… because Myuu is Papa's daughter."

For she who was worthy of being Hajime's daughter nothing was impossible. Sticking out her chest as she seemed to be self-confident, if Hajime could not come to meet her, Myuu made a declaration to go to meet him herself. Of course, it did not mean that Myuu accurately understood that Hajime was going to be returning to his birthplace by crossing over worlds. Not to mention, the likes of Myuu obtaining all of the Age of Gods magics capturing the Labyrinths or crossing over worlds was impossible.

And so, it was an impossible objective to realize that came out from the child's poor conception.

However, who in the world would laugh at that powerful declaration? Who in the world would foolishly discard her will? It was impossible to do. It should not be done. The words Remia said about Myuu having grown was well understood. Myuu, though it was a short time,

nevertheless she came to grow watching the reliable backs of Hajime and the others. Can such a beloved daughter be parted with now? Was it fine to part with her? No, there was no way such a thing could be done. There was no way that doing it was fine.

Because of this, Hajime decided. Now, as he made one more vow here.

“Myuu, please wait.”

“Papa?”

Myuu, who sensed that Hajime’s atmosphere changed, tilted her head as she made a face that seemed curious. Until just now, there was not at all an expression that was worried anywhere, and the straightforward gaze that was always powerful pierced Myuu’s eyes. It was the eye that Myuu had always watched.

“When everything is over. I will come back to Myuu’s place without fail. Taking everyone, we will come to meet Myuu.”

“……Really?”

“Yeah, really. Have I ever told a lie to Myuu?”

At Hajime’s words, Myuu shook her head with a *furufuru*. Hajime gently stroked such a Myuu’s hair.

“When I come back, next time I’ll take Myuu along too. And, my home town, I’ll show you the place I was born. You’ll surely be surprised. Because my home town is a place like a surprise box.”

“! The place Papa was born? I want to see!”

“Are you looking forward to it?”

“A lot!”

Myuu made a delighted expression while jumping up and down with a *pyonpyon*. At such a Myuu, Hajime gently narrowed his eyes. Myuu, who smiled with her whole

face had blown away the anxiety over the matter of meeting with Hajime again, and without changing the force of hopping up and down, she jumped at Hajime. Hajime, who caught her firmly, held Myuu in his arms as it was.

“Than, can you be a good girl waiting with Mama? Don’t do something dangerous. Listening well to what Mama says, can you do your best to help?”

“Yes!”

Hajime made an apology with his gaze to Remia who was staring at the exchange of the two such people while smiling. With, “Sorry, I decided it selfishly.”

In contrast with that, when Remia slowly shook her head, she nodded as she matched gazes with Hajime firmly. With, “Please don’t worry about it.” That warm gaze, there was not even a bit of the color of condemnation, instead it contained feelings of gratitude.

Was the eye contact of such a Papa and Mama noticed? While Myuu watched Hajime and Remia alternatively, she pulled Hajime’s clothes with a *kuikui*.

“Papa, Mama too? Is Mama also the same?”

“Aah, that’s……Remia?”

“Yes, what is it, dear? You’re not saying that only I am left out, right?”

“No, that is so, but…… seriously, this place is ‘another world’?”

“Ara ara, to the place that the daughter and husband go, is there any way that I won’t follow? Ufufu.”

With Hajime holding the daughter, the figure of Remia nestled close to there. It was a normal married couple. Kaori and the others cut in as if to say, “Like we’ll let you-!” and the tumult spread. Where did the serious mood that was done in the beginning go? With Kaori and

the others and Remia unfolding a war of smiles, to Hajime who was left out of it before anyone noticed, Yue stepped up with a *tokotoko*.

“……You’re taking them along?”

“Are you against it?”

When Hajime responded so to Yue’s question, Yue shook her head, staring at Hajime with a gentle look somewhere, and replied.

“……If it is something that Hajime decided.”

“Is that so?”

“……But, what about if you can’t choose the timing?”

It was the same question as Hajime’s concern. Obtaining the Age of Gods magics, assuming that he even obtained the means to return to his home town somehow, it was not necessarily so that he could cross over worlds at a time whenever he liked. Or, there was fully the possibility too of it becoming a situation that was different from what he promised with Myuu. If it became such a thing, Myuu’s heart would surely be deeply wounded.

However, when Hajime shrugged his shoulders, he turned a strong look that carried determination towards Yue while floating a smile on his mouth. Yue also, because she just tried to ask tentatively, her mouth loosened like the reply was said that it was understood.

“I’ll do it one way or another. No matter what I’ll return to the place of Myuu, and show her Japan too. If we crossed over worlds leaving Myuu, then by all means, it’s fine if we come back to this world again. It’s fine if we cross over worlds any number of times. Is that the only difference?”

“……N. Only that.”

Floating smiles that they were understanding each other,

Hajime and Yue matched their gazes closely. Yue thought she was feeling happy that Hajime was able to value something to the extent that he made a vow. Hajime also, appreciating that sort of her, again filled his heart loving Yue who was smiling at him. As always, Hajime's and Yue's combination ability "Pink Space" was invoked.

Neglecting the others' tumult, to Hajime and Yue who were making a world of just two people, already Kaori and the others made amazed expressions. However, to Myuu who was the daughter, such an ability seemed not to apply, and when she forced her way between them magnificently, she demanded to be held again to Hajime-papa. Although they made a promise to meet again, it did not change that they were separating for awhile. The last night seemed to become a situation where she acted spoiled with all her might.

The next day, Hajime and the others, seen off by Myuu and Remia, began a trip from the marine town Erisen.

It's been a day and half since they set foot once again into the world of brown.

Hajime aimed straight for the Ankaji (Ancadi) dukedom with the help of the magical powered four-wheeler while great heaps of dust rose from behind. Their original destination was the Sea of Trees, but they changed directions because they thought they might be able to repair the oasis if Koari used her reproduction magic.

The reproduction magic has the effect of literally returning anything back to its original form. So Hajime judged that he should be able to restore the polluted

oasis, succeeding with reproduction where recovery magic's purification failed.

Hajime had no reason to particularly object. They hadn't had a chance to try the local specialty fruits last time, so he easily took Kaori's suggestion to return.

Unlike last time, the entrance to Ankaji was full of people waiting in line. A lot of big wagons lined up, and judging from the atmosphere, it felt like a line of merchants.

"That's a very large caravan." Hajime stated flatly.

"…. Nn… will take time." Yue added.

"They're probably bringing in new supplies?" Kaori suggested.

Kaori's guess seemed to be right. The reason behind the long line was from relief request from the Heilig Kingdom. Merchants were taking advantage of the troop's movement and traveled with the relief corps. The Heilig relief corps seemed to accept the Ankaji merchants as long as they didn't cause problems.

Anyway, because the oasis had been ruined, other than the stockpiled crops, it was necessary to destroy the tainted crops for safety reasons. This caused a large need for food as well as water. Ankaji couldn't afford to be choosy who they got help from.

Hajime disregarded the caravan. Not wanting to wait under the desert heat, he drove the four wheeler up to the gate without waiting in line.

People of the caravan began to notice the black object and started to run, their hearts likely screaming out "Is that a demon they're sitting in?" Towards the dangerous stares mixed with fear and wariness, Hajime brandished his weapon as the vehicle approached the gatekeeper in a cloud of dust.

As they drew near, the soldiers saw the 4 wheeler and

suddenly became noisy. They moved to challenge Hajime, but colleagues who recognized the 4 wheeler convinced them to approach without their weapons. As they approach Hajime, they dispatch a messenger to run back to the city.

Hajime and his company left the 4 wheeler while ignoring the chaos their presence caused. As always, several people are enchanted by Yue's good looks. As Hajime placed the 4 wheeler back into his treasure warehouse, their eyes turned to wonder.

"It's like that. Has the God of the Apostles returned?" the gatekeeper asks as he watches the figure of Kaori.

The soldiers were relieved to see Kaori. Perhaps they recognized her from the time they had brought Randzi back or when they went to recover the serene stones from the Guryuu-en Great Volcano.

It appears like the 4 wheeler had become known as Kaori's transport, and they named her the "God of the Apostles". Hajime didn't feel the need to correct them as they were not exactly wrong. Since they recognized Kaori the best, they put her out in front.

"Yes, we returned to try to purify the Oasis. Please pass this on to the lords…" Kaori began.

"Oasis! Is it true?" The gatekeeper responded.

"I'm only saying it's possible…"

"Nevertheless, if it's an apostle… and we apologize for the impoliteness in such a place. We've already sent a messenger. I cannot leave my post, but a lord should be coming immediately to escort you if you'd like to come to our waiting area."

It seems they've gained recognition for previously rescuing the country. Hajime can see the respect in the eyes of the soldiers as they gaze at him. They were

getting the VIP treatment. While cautiously watching the merchants that gave him curious looks, Hajime once again set foot into the Ankaji Dukedom.

The lord Randzi ran up breathlessly after about 15 minutes of waiting. It was pretty quick arrival. At least to Randzi, it looked like they were important.

“It’s been a while. I’m glad you’re all safe. I was worried when you did not come back after entrusting the serene stones to Tio-dono. It would have been troublesome if our savior had died before we could express our gratitude.”

“I’m just a mere adventurer. But well, I thank you. As you can see, your relief is safely received.”

“Oh, and we finished stockpiling the food with the assistance we received. Along with the reservoir that Yue made, you’ve bought us sufficient time. The people won’t go hungry thanks to you and the merchants.”

Randzi gently laughed with slightly hollow cheeks. It seemed he had been run ragged to save Ankaji. The fatigue seemed to ooze out in his expressions. He wasn’t getting enough time to rest.

“Lord. As for the purification of the oasis…” Kaori began.

“Apostle-dono… No, Kaori-dono. The Oasis is as usual. Thanks to the fresh groundwater, the purification is proceeding little by little. At least half a year and the oasis should be completely purified. One year before it soaks into the nearby soil and purifies it so that we can plant again.” Randzi responds a little depressed.

Kaori explains that she might be able to immediately purify it. Randzi’s response is dramatic. Taking a moment for it to sink in, “Seriously!?” Randzi spits out feverishly. Kaori shyly nods in verification while moving to hide

behind Hajime, taken aback by his exuberance. The distraught Randzi corrects himself, then asks for the purification politely.

Since that was their intention anyway, Hajime nodded and Randzi led them to the oasis. The oasis is not very popular right now. In the past, it was a crowded place where people relaxed. Randzi was expressionless, but gave off a lonely atmosphere as he remembered the former oasis.

Kaori moves up to the shore of the oasis and begins to cast reproduction magic.

Although Hajime had obtained the reproduction magic, as usual his aptitude for it was virtually nothing. However, in the case of Shea, it seems there is an automatic recovery effect, but it had to be activated consciously. Also, her physical and mental strength seem to recover far faster. Steadily, Shea is becoming even more superhuman. Along with her proficiency levels, body weight manipulation, and body strengthening, she has come to be like a heavy tank with automatic recovery installed.

The one with the most aptitude was Kaori, followed by Teo, and finally Yue. In the case of Yue, as usual, as a consequence of her own special auto-regeneration, this magic seems to have a poor recovery in comparison. On the other hand, for the healing Kaori, her high aptitude for recovery magic seems to lead to her having a strong grasp on “reproduction”, allowing her to use it more comprehensively and efficiently than anyone else. It’s a bit sad that Yue won’t be able to use it to improve her combat prowess.

Kaori’s begins to chant. It’s a long cast. It initially took her 7 minutes but after practicing she was able to bring it down to 3. Since it only took her a week to learn it, it

was practically a cheat. However, since Yue was present it was hard to truly call her a cheat in comparison. Compared to Yue's abilities, this seemed easy.

"—-Stopping elephant" she extends a white staff while closing her eyes and murmuring the final words.

In the next moment, a pale light resembling a firefly appeared, and then fell into the middle of the oasis. The entire oasis started to shine, and pale light particles began to bubble up to the surface and float into the sky. It was a majestic scene that touched the heart. It truly felt like the corruption was being purged by heavenly light.

Everyone forgot to breathe as they admired the sight. Even after the mysterious glow covering the oasis floated away into the sky, Randzi stood without a word, immersing himself in the afterglow.

While supporting Kaori who was swaying a little from exhaustion, Hajime taps Randzi. Randzi snaps out of it and orders his men to survey the water quality. His subordinates hurry to examine the oasis with detection magic. After making a hard swallow, Randzi watches over his men, whom upon finishing their inspection report their results with expressions of disbelief.

"…. It's recovered." A subordinate mutters.

"Repeat that?" Randzi demands.

The subordinate adds words of confirmation and Randzi sucks in his breath, now knowing the truth.

"No abnormalities in the oasis! It is the original oasis! It has been completely cleaned!"

At that moment, Randzi and his subordinates cheered in unision. They threw whatever documents they had and abandoned whatever they were holding as they hugged each other and slapped their backs, expressing their joy.

Randzi also looked up at the heavens, exhaling deeply and wondering if this was a bit too easy.

“After that, soil regeneration. Lord, where were the crops you discarded?”

“… Well, it is all collected in one place. Because of all the time and labor, it was regrettable that we had to toss them… wait, you don’t mean…?”

“If Yue and Tio join, it should be possible…”

“…. Nn, no problem.”

“They were grown with effort, it’d be a shame to throw them away.” Hajime added.

As Randzi realized they might be able to not only recover the soil, but the lost crops as well, his hand went to his chest and he lowered his head deeply without hesitation. It was not something a lord should do, but that was the extent of his appreciation for their actions. The love for them was deep in this country. It was the kind of thing that transforms your sense of appreciation.

After receiving Randzi’s bow, Hajime tried to move them towards the farmland. However, he suddenly stopped when he felt a disturbance. A frenzied group of people were approaching in the distance. The soldiers of the Anjaki Dukedom were coming towards them in a straight line with numerous soldiers of different attires. Using “far vision”, Hajime could see that the group was populated with Seikyo church officials and temple knights from this town.

As soon as they approached Hajime’s group, they immediately surrounded them in a semicircular shape. An elderly man in white regal robes of the temple knights stepped forward. The dangerous atmosphere between the man and Hajime was only divided by the presence of Randzi.

“See them, they are dangerous.”

“Foribin Bishop, what the hell is this? They are dangerous? This hero has saved out dukedom twice already. I will not ignore disrespect to them as a lord of Ankaji.”

“The elderly man who was called Forbin Bishop snorted a laugh at Randzi’s words.

“Hmph, hero? Hold your tongue. They are already accredited heretics. Careless words will come crashing down around you!” the Bishop snarled.

“They’re branded heretics? Ridiculous, I have not heard of this.”

Randzi was shocked at the word heretic being attached to Hajime. Randzi was a follower of the church though. He was aware of the weight of those words. Did they make a mistake? He met the Bishop with disbelief.

“Of course you wouldn’t know, the news just arrived this morning. And the heretic showing up right now, don’t you think that’s exquisite timing? Surely this was a message from God. Destroy the enemies of God… now on to Center…”

Hajime couldn’t hear the voices of the last lines, but apparently Hajime has been branded a heretic. Randzi and the Bishop eye him unintentionally.

Hajime seems neither shocked nor in any particular hurry, only offering a shrug as if to ask “What was I supposed to do?” to Randzi.

Randzi wrinkled his eyebrows after seeing Hajime’s response. However, the bishop opens his mouth and openly laughs.

“And now, I have to subdue the enemies of God. They say this man is quite brutal, but I have a hundred temple knights behind me. Come with us quietly so we don’t

upset the public peace, and we won't make things more difficult for you.

Randzi closes his eyes. Without any more information, he could guess why Hajime was branded a heretic considering his power and his personality. Hajime was a force the church couldn't manage and thus couldn't allow.

However, given the strength of Hajime's companions, stopping them was a decision equal to suicide. Randzi doubted the sanity of picking a war with Hajime. He was wondering if they had their priorities straight.

It is a fact that Hajime saved Ankaji. He healed the people who were fallen by poison, prepared the water that was their lifeline, subdued the monster lurking in the oasis, and further purified the oasis back to how it was before.

To this huge debt, it was troubling considering what they could provide as an award. Randzi's eyes grew wide at the realization that an opportunity just presented itself. And, with a serving lord's dignity, Randzi broke the silence and provided the impatient Bishop an answer.

"Rejected."

"… I'm sorry, what?"

To the totally unexpected words, the Forubin bishop provided an interesting goofy expression. The appearance of the bishop, inwardly, put a wry smile on Randzi. It should have been impossible for Randzi to go against the decision of the Seikyo church. Randzi repeated the words with unexpected determination.

"I said I refuse. These heros are our national salvation. If you would make them an enemy, then I cannot forgive the Seikyo church."

"Are… you… insane? You cannot go against the church.

Do you want to be branded as a heretic as well?”

In response to Randzi’s words, the bishop raised a startled cry clogged with anger. The temple knights also looked at each other with puzzled looks.

“Bishop, does Central not know their accomplishments? He saved the dukedom when we were attacked by a deadly poison. Your reports should also mention that he rescued Ur town, don’t they? I don’t understand the sanity of this heretic claim. Reconsider the heresy on account of these new facts.”

“Silence! The decision is final! This is God’s will! That is unforgivable. If you continue to protect this heretic, then Ankaji itself will be branded. Take heed!”

The bishop’s pupils had the light of mania in them. The way he was screaming gave an atmosphere that did not seem very clergy-like. Randzi stared at him with a cold eye. Hajime had come up beside him with an imperceptible motion and asked with a surprised look.

“Are you sure about this? Both the Kingdom and the Church are going to retaliate. As a lord, will you be alright?”

Randzi does not answer Hajime. Instead, he turns Hajime’s gaze to the surrounding men, who gave off an aura of preparedness and acceptance. Their eyes shown with death as if saying “to die killing is the way to go.” It was that kind of expression.

The bishop also seemed to read the change in mood and shouts out a last warning while his face reddened and became more frenzied.

“Is this your answer? Public, your way ends here. Well, your way is not. This is the end for anyone who gets in my way. You’ll receive God’s divine punishment and fall to ruin!”

“This is Ankaji, we’re not so shameless as to sell a hero who saved us. Divine? Like I’d believe God’s judgement would be so shameless. I guess my faith differs from the Bishop’s God.”

The Bishop’s word became expressionless afer the angry words from Randzi. He raised one hand to try to send a signal for the Temple Knights to attack.

At this time, there was a thump! Something flew at the knights and struck one of their helmets with a clang. At their feet was a pebble. It didn’t do any damage to the Knight, but why was it there? Such questions were fleeting as another stone was thrown, bumping noisily against the temple knight’s armor.

If you looked where the stone’s came from, many of the inhabitants of Ankaji had gathered in the intervening time, surrounding the Templar knights.

They had come in response to the mysterious lights that had previously come from the Oasis and came upon the scene of the temple knights surrounding their lord and Hajime.

They remembered the treatments they had the received from Kaori as “God of the Apostle”, the serene stones, and the magic bullet challenging the labyrinth to save them. They were indignant at the behavior of the church which turned into hostility as they began to throw stones.

“Stop! People of Ankaji! They are God’s enemy. Heretics! You are going against the will of God!”

Forubin is shouting loudly, trying to solve the excited inhabitant’s misunderstanding. They just didn’t know that Hajime was labeled a heretic and will relax once the bishop explains things to them, or so the bishop thought.

In fact, the words of Seikyo church bishop caused the inhabitants to stop throwing stones and look at each

other in confusion.

This time, Randzi spoke out with dignity.

“My beloved people, Listen! I was just informed that the oasis was purified. Our oasis has been returned to us through Hajime’s efforts. As well as the contaminated land. And the crops. They used their purification to return our Ankaji back to the way it way. They also brought me back to Ankaji. Make your decision with your own mind. Keep our hero of national salvation, or turn on him. I decided to keep him!”

The Bishop tried to mock Randzi’s speech, “in such empty words, there is no reason to go against the majesty of the church,” however, his smile of ridicule slowly dropped.

The inhabitant’s intention is shown in the form of stoning.

“and I, a….” The bishops words were sounded out by the slams of stones hitting armor.

“You act playfully, this is a matter of life or death!”

“The church did not do anything. Yet your insanity makes you want to harm the apostle who helped us!”

“What’s a heretic anyway? You’re abusing the term!”

“It must have been heretics that authorized this!”

“Defend Kaori!”

“Long live the lord!”

“Kaori, I dedicate myself to you!”

“Let’s start a Kaori fan club!”

Apparently, the inhabitants seemed to have a sense of deep love and respect for Rindzi and Kaori. Pushing aside the faith, they defended Rindzi and Kaori with all of their spirit. No, it’s more like they changed their faith itself. However, it seems like they have a faith of their own,

belief that no one will harm Kaori who saved them as the "God of the Apostles". In short, it was a faith that exceeded the confidence of the bishop. It wasn't known where that trust was to begin with.

Residents gathered one after another. The people's forces are not at all inferior to the Temple Knights, but the bishop became a beacon of anger and hostility that raged endlessly. The Temple Knights started to back up in retreat.

"Bishop-dono, these are the intentions of Ankaji. What of your previous allegations?"

"It's not as simple as you think…"

The Bishop turned his heel while grinding his teeth, a scowl leveled at Hajime. The knights rapidly move to follow after him. The bishop seemed to lose steam, giving off the last of his passion with loud footsteps as he headed back to the church.

"Is this really okay? Will they leave it at this?"

Hajime had a concerned look, having been left out of the loop until the end. Kaori's direct involvement with the crisis with the church left a worried look on her face.

Despite this, Randzi replied with a cool look like it was no big deal.

"This is the choice of Ankaji. The people who live in this dukedom are grateful to you. It's unthinkable to have you die in our territory that is why they would have killed to protect you. I don't want such a coup in this country."

"That aside, I wouldn't be hurt by someone of their level…" Hajime responded scratching his cheek.

Randzi laughed at his words.

"If that's so, then that means you guys are scarier than the church. Being the nation's hero is only half the reason we protected you. We also don't want to become your

enemies. I can't even imagine the amount of magic you possess to slaughter an unknown monster in a breeze and capture a large labyrinth in just a few days. You ignore the church and don't respond to the threat of a hundred knights either. You've defeated an army of ten thousand and there are even rumors you defeated a demon instantly. No, it's downright scary. There will be a time when I succeed after my father passes, but I'll take pride in having made a wise decision between the two."

So Randzi had no intention of catering to the church's hostility towards Hajime. He put the church and Hajime on a scale of who was a stronger ally and chose the latter. Indeed, it could be said the country itself would act against the majesty of the church. To say this was a bold decision would not be an exaggeration.

Hajime smiled at the thought that his confrontation with the church was thwarted by the people themselves. As the people moved around them in a fluster with care for their safety, Kaori laughed happily. Hajime realized this was the path Aiko had hoped for him, one that was not a "lonely way of life."

Three days after the turmoil from the church.

Hajime's party had finished purifying the agricultural areas, and he was watching the oasis shine from a hilltop.

Hajime could see the sparkling surface of the water. People had gathered around the oasis once again with liveliness and smiles. Couples sat in the grass watching the kids frolic in the water. There were people pier fishing, and lovers in their own little worlds on boats. People had returned to the oasis, and they all had smiles.

This is how Hajime passed this day in Ankaji. He had intended to leave as soon as he had bought some of the specialty fruit, but he had been kept there by the lord

and the inhabitants' generosity and ended up staying a few extra days.

Hajime worried that with the current mood in the city, their departure from Akanji would be met with a parade. He had to make a request to Randzi to keep things modest. They were able to finish their send-off at the lord's mansion, and finally Hajime made it to the gates, taking one last look at the oasis before they left.

"You stand out, perhaps you can wear something a little less conspicuous."

Hajime mentions to Yue nearby as he turns to leave.

"It does…? Tired of?"

"What? Is that so? Hajime-kun."

"Well, Yue, Kaori. From my view, you guys just stand out."

"Well, I – it's because this dress is not to pass through the gates…"

Shea had said these outfits where part of the so-called belly dance costume. Their navels were visible between a high top and short pants. It was very sensational, their tiny navels dazzling. It guaranteed that every eye would be on the one wearing it.

It seems like a common way of dressing in Ankaji. When Yue received the gift from a lady of the manor, she immediately began wearing it to show off. Upon seeing Yue in it, Hajime's eyes became like a wild beasts. Apparently, Hajime seems to be weak to that kind of costume. His eyes were glued to Kaori once she started wearing it, prompting Shea and Tio to do the same.

Other than with Yue, they didn't elicit enough response from Hajime. As a result, they started wearing the outfits all day. However, Yue's outfit collapsed all reason in Hajime.

Even now as the set out, everyone remains in their erotic costumes. Finally, Hajime had reached his wits end and started to poke the point loudly and aggressively, despite being somewhat happy, to make them dress normal once again.

It's been two days since leaving Ankaji.

They were on the road leading to Horuado. Hajime's four wheeler steadily approached a caravan that was being attacked by Rashiki thieves.

It was at this point that Hajime and Kaori would meet a surprising person.

Chapter 97

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getting enough time to rest.

“Lord. As for the purification of the oasis…” Kaori began.

“Apostle-dono… No, Kaori-dono. The Oasis is as usual. Thanks to the fresh groundwater, the purification is proceeding little by little. At least half a year and the oasis should be completely purified. One year before it soaks into the nearby soil and purifies it so that we can plant again.” Randzi responds a little depressed.

Kaori explains that she might be able to immediately purify it. Randzi’s response is dramatic. Taking a moment for it to sink in, “Seriously!?” Randzi spits out feverishly. Kaori shyly nods in verification while moving to hide behind Hajime, taken aback by his exuberance. The distraught Randzi corrects himself, then asks for the purification politely.

Since that was their intention anyway, Hajime nodded and Randzi led them to the oasis. The oasis is not very popular right now. In the past, it was a crowded place where people relaxed. Randzi was expressionless, but gave off a lonely atmosphere as he remembered the former oasis.

Kaori moves up to the shore of the oasis and begins to cast reproduction magic.

Although Hajime had obtained the reproduction magic, as usual his aptitude for it was virtually nothing. However, in the case of Shea, it seems there is an automatic recovery effect, but it had to be activated consciously. Also, her physical and mental strength seem to recover far faster. Steadily, Shea is becoming even more superhuman. Along with her proficiency levels, body weight manipulation, and body strengthening, she has come to be like a heavy tank with automatic recovery installed.

The one with the most aptitude was Kaori, followed by

Teo, and finally Yue. In the case of Yue, as usual, as a consequence of her own special auto-regeneration, this magic seems to have a poor recovery in comparison. On the other hand, for the healing Kaori, her high aptitude for recovery magic seems to lead to her having a strong grasp on “reproduction”, allowing her to use it more comprehensively and efficiently than anyone else. It’s a bit sad that Yue won’t be able to use it to improve her combat prowess.

Kaori’s begins to chant. It’s a long cast. It initially took her 7 minutes but after practicing she was able to bring it down to 3. Since it only took her a week to learn it, it was practically a cheat. However, since Yue was present it was hard to truly call her a cheat in comparison. Compared to Yue’s abilities, this seemed easy.

“—-Stopping elephant” she extends a white staff while closing her eyes and murmuring the final words.

In the next moment, a pale light resembling a firefly appeared, and then fell into the middle of the oasis. The entire oasis started to shine, and pale light particles began to bubble up to the surface and float into the sky. It was a majestic scene that touched the heart. It truly felt like the corruption was being purged by heavenly light.

Everyone forgot to breathe as they admired the sight. Even after the mysterious glow covering the oasis floated away into the sky, Randzi stood without a word, immersing himself in the afterglow.

While supporting Kaori who was swaying a little from exhaustion, Hajime taps Randzi. Randzi snaps out of it and orders his men to survey the water quality. His subordinates hurry to examine the oasis with detection magic. After making a hard swallow, Randzi watches over his men, whom upon finishing their inspection

report their results with expressions of disbelief.

“…. It’s recovered.” A subordinate mutters.

“Repeat that?” Randzi demands.

The subordinate adds words of confirmation and Randzi sucks in his breath, now knowing the truth.

“No abnormalities in the oasis! It is the original oasis! It has been completely cleaned!”

At that moment, Randzi and his subordinates cheered in unision. They threw whatever documents they had and abandoned whatever they were holding as they hugged each other and slapped their backs, expressing their joy. Randzi also looked up at the heavens, exhaling deeply and wondering if this was a bit too easy.

“After that, soil regeneration. Lord, where were the crops you discarded?”

“… Well, it is all collected in one place. Because of all the time and labor, it was regrettable that we had to toss them… wait, you don’t mean…?”

“If Yue and Tio join, it should be possible…”

“…. Nn, no problem.”

“They were grown with effort, it’d be a shame to throw them away.” Hajime added.

As Randzi realized they might be able to not only recover the soil, but the lost crops as well, his hand went to his chest and he lowered his head deeply without hesitation. It was not something a lord should do, but that was the extent of his appreciation for their actions. The love for them was deep in this country. It was the kind of thing that transforms your sense of appreciation.

After receiving Randzi’s bow, Hajime tried to move them towards the farmland. However, he suddenly stopped when he felt a disturbance. A frenzied group of people

were approaching in the distance. The soldiers of the Anjaki Dukedom were coming towards them in a straight line with numerous soldiers of different attires. Using “far vision”, Hajime could see that the group was populated with Seikyo church officials and temple knights from this town.

As soon as they approached Hajime’s group, they immediately surrounded them in a semicircular shape. An elderly man in white regal robes of the temple knights stepped forward. The dangerous atmosphere between the man and Hajime was only divided by the presence of Randzi.

“See them, they are dangerous.”

“Foribin Bishop, what the hell is this? They are dangerous? This hero has saved out dukedom twice already. I will not ignore disrespect to them as a lord of Ankaji.”

“The elderly man who was called Forbin Bishop snorted a laugh at Randzi’s words.

“Hmph, hero? Hold your tongue. They are already accredited heretics. Careless words will come crashing down around you!” the Bishop snarled.

“They’re branded heretics? Ridiculous, I have not heard of this.”

Randzi was shocked at the word heretic being attached to Hajime. Randzi was a follower of the church though. He was aware of the weight of those words. Did they make a mistake? He met the Bishop with disbelief.

“Of course you wouldn’t know, the news just arrived this morning. And the heretic showing up right now, don’t you think that’s exquisite timing? Surely this was a message from God. Destroy the enemies of God… now on to Center…”

Hajime couldn't hear the voices of the last lines, but apparently Hajime has been branded a heretic. Randzi and the Bishop eye him unintentionally.

Hajime seems neither shocked nor in any particular hurry, only offering a shrug as if to ask "What was I supposed to do?" to Randzi.

Randzi wrinkled his eyebrows after seeing Hajime's response. However, the bishop opens his mouth and openly laughs.

"And now, I have to subdue the enemies of God. They say this man is quite brutal, but I have a hundred temple knights behind me. Come with us quietly so we don't upset the public peace, and we won't make things more difficult for you.

Randzi closes his eyes. Without any more information, he could guess why Hajime was branded a heretic considering his power and his personality. Hajime was a force the church couldn't manage and thus couldn't allow.

However, given the strength of Hajime's companions, stopping them was a decision equal to suicide. Randzi doubted the sanity of picking a war with Hajime. He was wondering if they had their priorities straight.

It is a fact that Hajime saved Ankaji. He healed the people who were fallen by poison, prepared the water that was their lifeline, subdued the monster lurking in the oasis, and further purified the oasis back to how it was before.

To this huge debt, it was troubling considering what they could provide as an award. Randzi's eyes grew wide at the realization that an opportunity just presented itself. And, with a serving lord's dignity, Randzi broke the silence and provided the impatient Bishop an answer.

“Rejected.”

“… I’m sorry, what?”

To the totally unexpected words, the Forubin bishop provided an interesting goofy expression. The appearance of the bishop, inwardly, put a wry smile on Randzi. It should have been impossible for Randzi to go against the decision of the Seikyo church. Randzi repeated the words with unexpected determination.

“I said I refuse. These heros are our national salvation. If you would make them an enemy, then I cannot forgive the Seikyo church.”

“Are… you… insane? You cannot go against the church. Do you want to be branded as a heretic as well?”

In response to Randzi’s words, the bishop raised a startled cry clogged with anger. The temple knights also looked at each other with puzzled looks.

“Bishop, does Central not know their accomplishments? He saved the dukedom when we were attacked by a deadly poison. Your reports should also mention that he rescued Ur town, don’t they? I don’t understand the sanity of this heretic claim. Reconsider the heresy on account of these new facts.”

“Silence! The decision is final! This is God’s will! That is unforgivable. If you continue to protect this heretic, then Ankaji itself will be branded. Take heed!”

The bishop’s pupils had the light of mania in them. The way he was screaming gave an atmosphere that did not seem very clergy-like. Randzi stared at him with a cold eye. Hajime had come up beside him with an imperceptible motion and asked with a surprised look.

“Are you sure about this? Both the Kingdom and the Church are going to retaliate. As a lord, will you be alright?”

Randzi does not answer Hajime. Instead, he turns Hajime's gaze to the surrounding men, who gave off an aura of preparedness and acceptance. Their eyes shown with death as if saying "to die killing is the way to go." It was that kind of expression.

The bishop also seemed to read the change in mood and shouts out a last warning while his face reddened and became more frenzied.

"Is this your answer? Public, your way ends here. Well, your way is not. This is the end for anyone who gets in my way. You'll receive God's divine punishment and fall to ruin!"

"This is Ankaji, we're not so shameless as to sell a hero who saved us. Divine? Like I'd believe God's judgement would be so shameless. I guess my faith differs from the Bishop's God."

The Bishop's word became expressionless afer the angry words from Randzi. He raised one hand to try to send a signal for the Temple Knights to attack.

At this time, there was a thump! Something flew at the knights and struck one of their helmets with a clang. At their feet was a pebble. It didn't do any damage to the Knight, but why was it there? Such questions were fleeting as another stone was thrown, bumping noisily against the temple knight's armor.

If you looked where the stone's came from, many of the inhabitants of Ankaji had gathered in the intervening time, surrounding the Templar knights.

They had come in response to the mysterious lights that had previously come from the Oasis and came upon the scene of the temple knights surrounding their lord and Hajime.

They remembered the treatments they had the received

from Kaori as “God of the Apostle”, the serene stones, and the magic bullet challenging the labyrinth to save them. They were indignant at the behavior of the church which turned into hostility as they began to throw stones.

“Stop! People of Ankaji! They are God’s enemy. Heretics! You are going against the will of God!”

Forubin is shouting loudly, trying to solve the excited inhabitant’s misunderstanding. They just didn’t know that Hajime was labeled a heretic and will relax once the bishop explains things to them, or so the bishop thought.

In fact, the words of Seikyo church bishop caused the inhabitants to stop throwing stones and look at each other in confusion.

This time, Randzi spoke out with dignity.

“My beloved people, Listen! I was just informed that the oasis was purified. Our oasis has been returned to us through Hajime’s efforts. As well as the contaminated land. And the crops. They used their purification to return our Ankaji back to the way it way. They also brought me back to Ankaji. Make your decision with your own mind. Keep our hero of national salvation, or turn on him. I decided to keep him!”

The Bishop tried to mock Randzi’s speech, “in such empty words, there is no reason to go against the majesty of the church,” however, his smile of ridicule slowly dropped.

The inhabitant’s intention is shown in the form of stoning.

“and I, a….” The bishops words were sounded out by the slams of stones hitting armor.

“You act playfully, this is a matter of life or death!”

“The church did not do anything. Yet your insanity makes you want to harm the apostle who helped us!”

“What’s a heretic anyway? You’re abusing the term!”

“It must have been heretics that authorized this!”

“Defend Kaori!”

“Long live the lord!”

“Kaori, I dedicate myself to you!”

“Let’s start a Kaori fan club!”

Apparently, the inhabitants seemed to have a sense of deep love and respect for Rindzi and Kaori. Pushing aside the faith, they defended Rindzi and Kaori with all of their spirit. No, it’s more like they changed their faith itself. However, it seems like they have a faith of their own, belief that no one will harm Kaori who saved them as the “God of the Apostles”. In short, it was a faith that exceeded the confidence of the bishop. It wasn’t known where that trust was to begin with.

Residents gathered one after another. The people’s forces are not at all inferior to the Temple Knights, but the bishop became a beacon of anger and hostility that raged endlessly. The Temple Knights started to back up in retreat.

“Bishop-dono, these are the intentions of Ankaji. What of your previous allegations?”

“It’s not as simple as you think…”

The Bishop turned his heel while grinding his teeth, a scowl leveled at Hajime. The knights rapidly move to follow after him. The bishop seemed to lose steam, giving off the last of his passion with loud footsteps as he headed back to the church.

“Is this really okay? Will they leave it at this?”

Hajime had a concerned look, having been left out of the loop until the end. Kaori’s direct involvement with the crisis with the church left a worried look on her face.

Despite this, Randzi replied with a cool look like it was no big deal.

“This is the choice of Ankaji. The people who live in this dukedom are grateful to you. It’s unthinkable to have you die in our territory that is why they would have killed to protect you. I don’t want such a coup in this country.”

“That aside, I wouldn’t be hurt by someone of their level…” Hajime responded scratching his cheek.

Randzi laughed at his words.

“If that’s so, then that means you guys are scarier than the church. Being the nation’s hero is only half the reason we protected you. We also don’t want to become your enemies. I can’t even imagine the amount of magic you possess to slaughter an unknown monster in a breeze and capture a large labyrinth in just a few days. You ignore the church and don’t respond to the threat of a hundred knights either. You’ve defeated an army of ten thousand and there are even rumors you defeated a demon instantly. No, it’s downright scary. There will be a time when I succeed after my father passes, but I’ll take pride in having made a wise decision between the two.”

So Randzi had no intention of catering to the church’s hostility towards Hajime. He put the church and Hajime on a scale of who was a stronger ally and chose the latter. Indeed, it could be said the country itself would act against the majesty of the church. To say this was a bold decision would not be an exaggeration.

Hajime smiled at the thought that his confrontation with the church was thwarted by the people themselves. As the people moved around them in a fluster with care for their safety, Kaori laughed happily. Hajime realized this was the path Aiko had hoped for him, one that was not a “lonely way of life.”

Three days after the turmoil from the church.

Hajime's party had finished purifying the agricultural areas, and he was watching the oasis shine from a hilltop.

Hajime could see the sparkling surface of the water. People had gathered around the oasis once again with liveliness and smiles. Couples sat in the grass watching the kids frolic in the water. There were people pier fishing, and lovers in their own little worlds on boats. People had returned to the oasis, and they all had smiles.

This is how Hajime passed this day in Ankaji. He had intended to leave as soon as he had bought some of the specialty fruit, but he had been kept there by the lord and the inhabitants' generosity and ended up staying a few extra days.

Hajime worried that with the current mood in the city, their departure from Akanji would be met with a parade. He had to make a request to Randzi to keep things modest. They were able to finish their send-off at the lord's mansion, and finally Hajime made it to the gates, taking one last look at the oasis before they left.

"You stand out, perhaps you can wear something a little less conspicuous."

Hajime mentions to Yue nearby as he turns to leave.

"It does…? Tired of?"

"What? Is that so? Hajime-kun."

"Well, Yue, Kaori. From my view, you guys just stand out."

"Well, I – it's because this dress is not to pass through the gates…"

Shea had said these outfits where part of the so-called belly dance costume. Their navels were visible between a high top and short pants. It was very sensational, their tiny navels dazzling. It guaranteed that every eye would

be on the one wearing it.

It seems like a common way of dressing in Ankaji. When Yue received the gift from a lady of the manor, she immediately began wearing it to show off. Upon seeing Yue in it, Hajime's eyes became like a wild beasts. Apparently, Hajime seems to be weak to that kind of costume. His eyes were glued to Kaori once she started wearing it, prompting Shea and Tio to do the same.

Other than with Yue, they didn't elicit enough response from Hajime. As a result, they started wearing the outfits all day. However, Yue's outfit collapsed all reason in Hajime.

Even now as the set out, everyone remains in their erotic costumes. Finally, Hajime had reached his wits end and started to poke the point loudly and aggressively, despite being somewhat happy, to make them dress normal once again.

It's been two days since leaving Ankaji.

They were on the road leading to Horuado. Hajime's four wheeler steadily approached a caravan that was being attacked by Rashiki thieves.

It was at this point that Hajime and Kaori would meet a surprising person.

Chapter 98

Warning: If you noticed Chuuni-sama's numbering, this is actually chapter 99. And chapter 97 was actually 98. There was a misnumbering in Japtem's work (perhaps by labeling the prologue 0?) that was inadvertently "corrected" when the google doc MTLs started. That misnumber has since been fixed recently so carry on to 99 (which is actually 100) and so on and so forth. You were only missing two chapters. Do NOT let chapter 99 confuse you. It does start that way. You're not missing a chapter. Quite a bit of stuff gets skipped between chapter 98 and 99, if the summary is to be believed.

It was Shia who first noticed the commotion.

"Isn't that someone being attacked ahead?"

As usual, Yue was pressed up against Hajime. Kaori tried to get between them, the aura of her dragon pressed up against Yue's lightning aura. The result was that Hajime had to be careful driving and thus didn't have his attention on what was in front of him.

As Shia said, there appeared to be a caravan ahead with two groups, one attacking the other. As their vehicle approached, Hajime's "distance vision" allowed him to see two groups in the middle of a battle, one offending and the other defending. Shea's usamimis picked up the roar of battle before Hajime could see them.

"They appear to be bandits. The bandits seem to outnumber the caravan guards over 40 to just 15. The difference in their combat potential is clear." Hajime describes the situation to Yue and Kaori.

"… Nn, the guards are putting up a good fight," Yue adds.

“They have a barrier spell surrounding the caravan, but it’s not going to hold out. The bandits are trying to break the wall with magic.”

“But their defense is holding for the moment.”

“Having a barrier cover the entire caravan stretches it pretty thin. It will not endure long. They’ve bought themselves some time, but it won’t hold.”

It appears like the caravan faced a surprise attack. Numerous people within the barrier were crouched down with injuries, or worse dead. They had managed to take out a few bandits, but the bandits were still proportionally more. They had managed to erect a barrier, but once it failed the people of the caravan would undoubtedly meet a gruesome end.

Hajime’s conversation was cut short as the barrier melted to nothingness. The bandits raised a shout and surged forward, breaking through the caravan’s remaining defenses with vicious grins on their faces. The escort squadron fought back desperately, but they were outgunned. One person after another fell to injuries from the bandits.

Kaori had a determined expression on her face, she turned to Hajime and requested he help rescue them in a tone that suggested she was agitated.

“Hajime-kun, please! Help them, if you can…”

Hajime didn’t respond, but accelerated his 4 wheeler instead. Since it was obvious the caravan would be wiped out if he didn’t help, he had already decided he wanted to know their story. He wanted to say that to Kaori, but didn’t.

The 4 wheeler chewed into the ground producing a “garri garri garri” sound as he accelerated with a vengeance, the car moving as if it was attached to a rocket engine.

“Hajime-kun, thank you…”

Kaori smiled happily as he began to take action. Hajime shrugged in response. Hajime was simply doing what he wanted to do. Yue tightened her seatbelt.

“Oh, that, Hajime-kun? Isn’t this a bit…”

The feeling seemed to be ruined as the four wheeler continued to accelerate moment by moment. Although she asked him to help, she knew how cars worked on earth, and the speed he was charging at them didn’t leave time to stop. Was he going to ram them with the 4 wheeler? Kaori could not help but think so.

With Kaori’s concerned look, Hajime responded.“Don’t they teach you to stomp the accelerator when you see a criminal in driving school?”

“Of course they wouldn’t teach that. Don’t twist the traffic laws to your discretion. Hey, Yue, don’t agree with him, stop nodding!”

While Kaori tsukkomi’d, Hajime ignored her, turning the vehicle towards a bandit sitting in the rear who appeared to be the leader. Hajime intended to kill the bandits by running them over without hesitation.

The bandit leader finally noticed the strange object approaching them leaving behind a cloud of dust. He issued instructions to nearby bandits, and they began to chant magic. To them, the 4 wheeler appeared to be some new kind of demon or monster. They would not have believed it was man-made, let alone operated by people.

Hajime poured magical power in to the 4 wheeler, operating one of its many functions. A blade of approximately 1 meter protruded from the sides and roof. The bandits fired flame bullets at the vehicle, but they bounced harmlessly off the 4 wheeler, so Hajime chose to

ignore them and kept driving forward. Even though the flame bullets were striking the vehicle, its steadfast rush towards the bandits put sour expressions on their faces.

Dogoo! Baki! Squish!

Horror, despair, and embarrassment – those were the expressions on the bandit's faces as they collided with the hood of the 4-wheeler.

As bandits flung over the roof, the blade on top ripped them to shreds. Some tried to jump to the sides to avoid the blades and were blown away instead. At 80 km/h, anyone who was lucky enough to miss the blades ended up with shattered bones and ruptured organs.

The rear group of bandits were wiped out in a moment, leaving seven dead.

After taking out the rear bandits, Hajime spun the car, putting it into a drift. The area became a slaughtering ground as the 4 wheeler cut into the bandits, leaving the surviving members of the caravan staring with stunned looks. Bandits and caravan guards in close combat suddenly stopped to stare at the scene.

As the bandits and caravan guards eye them cautiously, Hajime turned to Kaori as she leaned forward eagerly.

"If they attack us without compassion, we must be willing to do the same. Do you understand?" Hajime explained to Kaori.

"… yes, I understand."

Kaori understood that despite being kind, she wasn't allowed to heal or protect the people she would call enemies. If she did, she wouldn't be able to follow Hajime. She had made her resolve to be in his party. Hajime feared that Kaori would get in his way, but she gave him a resolute nod to alleviate his suspicions.

"I won't interfere. So do what you need to do." Hajime

sighed.

“Yes.” Kaori let out a smile, getting out of the 4 wheeler and racing to the closest injured person. She was surprised when it turned out to be a young woman. The bandits who had regained their resolved immediately approached Kaori aggressively, their faces twisted in anger over the bandits the 4 wheeler had killed.

“You whore! Die!” one of the bandits brandished his long sword while raising an angry voice.

Kaori spared him a sideways glance and then brushed past while ignoring him. She continued at a full sprint towards the injured person while beginning her chant. A moment later there was a loud bang, and man’s head exploded, easily ending his life.

Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan! Dopan!

The wind continuously carried the sounds of death with each crack of thunder. Each explosion resulted in the destruction of another head in a spectacle of blood. It was overwhelmingly harsh. The more than 40 bandits were reduced to half their number in a matter of seconds.

In a panic at the unbelievable sight, a few of the bandits tried to grab Shia and the other girls in an attempt to gain a hostage. One of the guards tried to shout out to the girls to give them a warning, but his worries were pointless. Shia’s superhuman growth was progressing quite nicely, and there were no openings in this combat rabbit!

Shia pulled out Doryukken from the treasure room, which appeared to the bandits like nothingness behind her. Passi! It made a satisfying sound as she swung it, the hammer stretching to size. As she swung, a circular white membrane formed on end. It was a wall of air which struck the upper bodies of three of the bandits, blowing them away in a single hit.

“Oops! Too much blood!”

Apparently, as they hadn’t fought any small fries in a while, Shia had forgotten to restrain herself when fighting a weaker enemy. She had intended to just toss the enemy back, but with her absent-minded spirit, she had sent their upper bodies flying without the lower. The sudden splattering of blood causes Shia to back up several steps in surprise.

Yue and Tio spared Shia amazed looks, even though they were in the middle of decimating the other bandits with a storm of magic.

The remaining 10 bandits were unceremoniously shot by Hajime, death immediately following without time to plead for their lives. It was pure destruction without any forgiveness.

Kaori used the recovery magic restoration to heal numerous people at once scattered across the caravan. Regrettably, many of the caravan guards who had fallen earlier had already breathed their last breath. Even reproduction magic could not help bring them back from the dead.

As Hajime approached Kaori, a person raced up to her quickly. The stranger was small-statured, their face hidden with a hood, causing them to appear suspicious. However, Hajime knew this was the person who had kept the barrier up to desperately protect the caravan. None of the caravan guards got in Hajime’s way as he approached them.

“Kaori!”

The hooded person threw out her hands and used her momentum to leap at Kaori while calling her name in a pretty voice. Kaori didn’t hide her astonishment, muttering the name of the person in the process.

“Lily (She’ll be called Riri or Ririana in the next chapter on)? After all, it is Lily? That barrier looked familiar. I didn’t think I’d find you in such a place, but I suspected…” It appeared Kaori recognized the hooded person as Lily.

—— Rather, Liliana S.B. Heilig (Hairihi), the third princess of the Heilig (Hairihi) Kingdom was the person in the hood.

Liliana hugged Kaori with relief, offering a glimpse of her big, blue eyes and apparent beauty hidden by the hood. Her eyes squeezed shut as she began to cry, speaking to Kaori quietly between sobs.

“I also did not think I’d find Kaori in this place. It is… good fortune. It seems that I haven’t exhausted my luck yet.”

“Lily? What’s wrong?”

Kaori didn’t quite get the meaning of Liliana’s words, but she noticed something was off and pulled back. Liliana put a finger on Kaori’s mouth, urging her not to use Liliana’s name.

Apparently Liliana was alone and had managed to slip into the caravan to get this far. Kaori gave a sympathetic look as she tried to emphasize with the struggle the princess must have faced.

“Kaori, are you guys done?” Hajime interrupted, oblivious to the mood.

Liliana gave Hajime a blank look. Suddenly, Liliana raised her voice and shouted “Hya!” Looking up at Hajime from within her hood, a light bulb seemed to go off in her head and she immediately began to greet Hajime.

“It’s Nagumo, isn’t it? Long time no see. We had heard about your survival after the fall. The strength and ability

to survive is worthy of respect. It was good you survived. While you were missing, Kaori was a wreck."

"Wait, Lily, we're fine now." Kaori spoke in a fluster.

"I heard about how Kaori confessed to Hajime from Shizuku, but you'll have to tell me more about it later."

Liliana was teasing Kaori in a fun tone, smiling from the back of her hood. Kaori turned bright red from embarrassment.

The princess's smile must be very popular with the public. There was no doubt that if she aimed it at the young and old alike, they would fall for her. However, Hajime wasn't particularly moved by her smile.

Without reading the atmosphere at all, he eyed her suspiciously and demands,"…And who exactly are you?"

"Heh?"

If Hajime didn't interrupt them, Liliana and Kaori would undoubtedly keep talking about the status of all the other students in the kingdom. Hajime didn't have the patience to be subtle. He wanted a direct answers.

Liliana was a princess with a great personality and who was loved by everyone she met. She was shocked to be addressed so improperly by a man who normally wouldn't even be worthy of meeting the princess, thus she let out a goofy voice involuntarily.

The panicked Kaori immediately tried to smooth out the situation on behalf of the dazed Liliana. She spoke in a low voice so no one else could hear them.

"Hajime you… Princess! It's the Princess! It's the Heilig Kingdom Princess Leliana that you're speaking to!"

"…….. Ah…"

"Gusu (sobbing), you've forgotten me, haven't you? Gusu." Leliana whined.

“Lily! Don’t cry because of that! Hajime-kun is kinda whatchamacallit. He’s special. No one normal would forget Lily. So you don’t need to cry!” Kaori attempted to smooth things out.

“Hey, can you not say those rude things so casually?” Hajime sighed.

Since Liliana’s watery eyes looked quite terrible, Kaori was desperate to comfort her. Hajime involuntarily tsukkomi’d, however Kaori gave him a dirt look that said “be quiet right now!” Meanwhile, Liliana was explaining “No, it’s okay Kaori, it just hurt my pride a little…” Across the board, the conclusion from the conversation seemed to be that Hajime was wrong for having completely forgotten who Liliana was.

With the atmosphere already delicate, a man from the caravan approached them.

“It’s been a long time…. It looks like you’re in good health…” the caravan leader stated.

“From health drinks…” Hajime responds

“Really? A health drink? A company that can make that must be a famous and wealthy company. Can you give me their name?”

“Oh-, no, nevermind. But how are you, Mottou?”

“Yeah, I’m glad you remember Mottou from the Yunker trading company. This is the second time you helped us out of a dangerous place. It looks like we were fated to meet again.” The man laughed and shook Hajime’s hand.

It seemed like the leader of the caravan was the man they escorted to Fhu-ren from Brook town some time ago.

Hajime also remembered when his commercial spirit got the better of him and Hajime had to put him in his place. Hajime had learned a bit about human nature from the man named Mottou. Although it seemed like Mottou’s

commercial spirit hadn't declined in the slightest. He casually touched Hajime's ring of storage as he let go of his hand. His eye's weren't laughing, but seemed to ask "Are you sure you're not going to sell that soon?" Maybe it was just Hajime's imagination.

Shia explained to Kaori and Lily their relationship with Mottou.

"A random person you met only once you can remember, but a princess?" Lily became even more depressed and Kaori struggled to comfort her in spite of the story she just heard.

As Mottou told it, they were heading to the Ankaji dukedom via Horuado. The plight of Ankaji had already been known, and as a merchant he was ready to head out there to earn a profit. It seemed that he had already been out there once and this was his second journey after a stop in the Imperial City. From the look on his face, it was clear they were making big profits.

Hajime explained that they were heading for the Sea of Trees after a stop in Huruado. Mottou begged them for an escort until they reached Horuado.

However, before Hajime could answer, Liliana put it a stop to it.

"I'm sorry for interrupting you, Merchant. I must speak with you for a moment. Thank you for transporting me this far. I'm sorry for my selfish request, but I won't be joining you the rest of the way to Horuado."

"Oh, you're not heading to Horuado anymore?"

"Yes, this point is fine. I will, of course, pay for the entire trip."

It seemed that Liliana was taking advantage of the caravan to make it to Horuado. Having met Hajime on the way, she no longer felt it was necessary. At the point,

Hajime received a tap on his shoulder and Kaori whispered in his ear.

“Don’t be cruel to Lily anymore!” she gave a silent plea with her eyes.

“Is that so? Well, it’s been a pleasure. Don’t worry about the money.” Mottou continued.

“Huh? No… why?”

Mottou had refused to receive money, which confused Liliana. The caravan had provided bed and food along with an escort. Coming from Mottou the merchant, those words seemed completely unexpected. Liliana gave Mottou a troubled smile.

“Don’t trouble yourself too much on it. But here’s some advice. Typically, a caravan will charge extra passengers before they depart. To not have to pay before you leave typically suggests they’re up to something, or don’t plan to charge you in the first place. This is the latter.”

“Is that so…”

“I don’t know what your circumstances are, but since you’re traveling alone I assumed it was serious. During a crisis, if a merchant such as myself helps, then in the future the people of this country may find confidence with this merchant.”

Liliana realized that Mottou knew her identity from the beginning. He pretended not to know her so he could help without drawing attention.

“Then at least I should offer a token of my appreciation. Without your help, I never would have made it out of the Imperial City.”

“Heh… the thing you want most is often the most difficult purchase for a merchant, you know?”

“Eh?…. No, I don’t know.” Liliana responded confused.

“It’s trust.” Mottou explained.

“Trust?”

“Yes, a business without trust can’t thrive and never will makea profit. However, to help a young lady out in a serious situation, the Yunker Trading Company might become known as a company you can trust. Your fare will be paid no matter.”

Liliana held a wry smile at the words he spoke. If you use money unreasonably, it’s synonymous with a lack of trust. There were some contrary feelings welling up in Liliana. Eventually, she gave up on them and took Mottou’s good will straight on.

“Your trading company is truly worthy of relying on. This Heilig princess will never forget your kindness and dedication. Thank you!”

“Your words are wasted on this one.” Mottou bowed deeply with respect.

Then Mottou turned, leaving Liliana and Hajime on the spot as his caravan headed down the planned route to Horuado. He left in a manner of knowing that he’d receive his own heretic certification for aiding the princess. He had already received the information that the Ankaji dukedom had recovered thanks to Hajime. Hajime could only guess why he chose to help in this manner. He supposed Mottou would say he did It to “Earn favor for a better tomorrow”, the slogan of a genuine merchant. (Translation note: It’s implied that he never had planned to go to Ankaji, and had done it purely to help the princess, in order to get in good with the royal family, so to speak)

After Mottou had left, the remaining party headed off in the magic four wheeler while Liliana began to explain her story. Liliana’s expression was full of tension and impatience which gave Hajime a foreboding feeling.

Finally, she began to speak.

“Aiko was kidnapped…”

Hajime sensed that there was more to it than that.

To summarize Liliana’s story:

Recently, the mood inside the Royal Palace seemed more uncomfortable than Liliana remembered.

The King committed himself to the Seikyo church more fervently than he had ever done in the past. The Prime minister and the other leaders also seemed to get caught up in his fervor, their belief strengthening unreasonably.

If it was just that… but there was also the fact that one after another, everyone seemed to fall in line with the church. Their collaboration was enhanced like never before. Leliana kept telling herself it was her imagination.

The discomfort didn’t stop there. Everyone seemed oddly devoid of any ambition. She had attempted to talk with knights and soldier she knew, familiar faces, and they all responded properly, but their responses seemed mechanical. Maybe even something like an illness.

She even tried to consult with Meld, the one knight she had the most trust in, but he always was kept out of sight and busy. Liliana couldn’t manage to catch him even once to talk.

Meanwhile, Aiko finally returned to the Imperial City with details on Ur town. Liliana seemed to have been present at the time. Suddenly, an abnormal demand was made. It was the call to make Hajime a heretic. Credited with saving Ur, the objections and opinions of Aiko, who boasted great name recognition and popularity as the “fertility goddess”, were completely ignored.

The conclusion seemed unreasonable, and Liliana had been a fierce protestor, although her father didn’t budge

no matter what she said. His stubbornness seemed to border on obsession. Instead, Liliana herself was accused of having a lack of faith, and her father started to see her as an enemy, rather than a daughter.

Liliana pretended that they had convinced her, and then immediately made plans to run away. She wanted to discuss what was going on with Aiko first. Liliana knew that Aiko was planning to meet the rest of the students to discuss the events around Hajime fall at dinner, so she wanted to meet her beforehand and discuss her fears.

She had been approaching Aiko's room when she heard her arguing with another woman in the corridor. When she peeped around the corner, she saw Aiko unconscious and in the hands of a woman with silver hair wearing a church frock.

The woman made Liliana afraid, and she immediately dashed into a nearby hidden passage only known to the royal family.

Although the silver-haired woman had noticed and looked for her, she didn't notice the hidden passage itself and left Liliana in peace. Liliana was convinced that the silver haired woman was the mastermind behind all of this. That everything was connected and that she needed to tell someone.

However, since Aiko was ambushed, it stood to reason that the students were being watched. She also didn't know Meld's whereabouts. Then she remembered that one of the students, a dependable friend, wasn't in the capital. So she decided she had to find Kaori. She had heard the story that Kaori was with Nagumo Hajime. That means it wouldn't be just the two of them she could rely on. She escaped in a hidden passage way with the plan to head to the Ankaji dukedom.

Based on the news that Ankaji was recovering after a

public emergency, in seemed like there was a high probability the person responsible was Hajime and company.

“And after that, you know, I was allowed to travel with the caravan of the Yunker Trading Company. I did not think I’d get noticed, let alone find myself getting attacked by bandits, or that I’d be helped by Kaori… not even in my dreams… a little while ago did not… but… I… it was scary… the church… What is happening? The nun with that silver hair… my father…”

Liliana hugged her body, trembling with fear. Rather than the talented princess she usually was, she just looked like a scared girl. Although that was no wonder. All the people she knew were turned into strangers, and she was afraid she’d be next.

Kaori hugged her tightly, trying to ease the fear that dug into Liliana’s mind even a little.

While watching the scene, Hajime went through the events in his mind. Lilliana’s story reminded him of the Merujine underwater ruins and the scene they had been shown in the end. The people had been built into a fervor with their belief in god. This was very truly a dangerous situation.

He didn’t know if those visions were true. Could it be happening? No, rather they should get the god level magic quickly, and leave this world as soon as possible.

However, Hajime couldn’t make the decision immediately, as he had to consider Aiko-sensei. Most likely, what Aiko was going to tell the students was true about their being brought to this world to fight for the god’s amusement. They liked to use people as pawns, and her words would have put a wedge of suspicion that would have inconvenienced them. It seems Hajime’s theory was spot on.

For them to decide to kidnap Aiko, it must have been Hajime's fault. They probably don't want to kill her, but the people who take pleasure in manipulating everyone like a hand puppet might decide to eventually make use of her.

Hajime was indebted to Aiko for the advice that she gave him. It's not as bad now that he is not alone.

For that reason…

"We're going to help my teacher."

Hajime chose to save, rather than abandon the one that needed him.

With those words, Liliana raised her face in hope. She wore an expression of relief over the fact that he'd come back with her to the city. She had heard that he was indifferent towards his classmates in this world and she had feared he would have abandoned them. She expected that convincing him to go would be difficult.

"You really will?"

Liliana asked for confirmation, but Hajime only shrugged.

"Please do not misunderstand. It's not because of your kingdom. It's for my teacher. She's been kidnapped because of me. I have to take responsibility."

"For Aiko…"

Liliana was a little discouraged when she realized that Hajime had no plans to lend his force to the kingdom, but she had some hope that he'd change his mind on the way. Despite his harsh words, she still broke into an involuntary smile.

"Well, in the process of helping my teacher, I might end up aiding the kingdom by accident." He admitted.

"…. Fufu, I hope that is the case. I thank you, Nagumo."

Since the woman who had kidnapped Aiko was wearing a frock of the church, and since the king was listening to the church to an abnormal degree, likely the church was the cause of all these problems. The church would likely get in Hajime's way, and they'd end up as his enemy. Helping Aiko and the fixing the kingdom seemed to be one and the same. By helping Aiko, Hajime would help Liliana.

Liliana shared a smile with Kaori, causing Hajime's mouth to distort a bit.

In addition to saving Aiko, Hajime had another purpose. It's the Kojiri (Spirit) magic in Kamiyama. From what they had heard from Miledi (armor-possessed prankster who gave them gravity magic), Kamiyama is also one of the seven major labyrinths. However, whether there is a large labyrinth entrance hidden by the church, Hajime had no clue. It was still worth a check although the church officials would likely get in his way.

So even though he had originally planned on going to the Sea of Trees, he now had a good reason to go for Kamiyama. And, in the process he'd rescue Aiko, with the likelihood of a fight with church very high. If he attacked the head temple, maybe that's all he'd need to get the Kojiro (Spirit) magic, or so he thought.

With regards to the silver-haired woman, Hajime mentioned that he thought he had seen a silver haired person in the visions given to them in the Meljeene Underwater Ruins. On the luxury liner, there was a woman in a hood who disappeared and they most certainly had silver hair. Hajime couldn't guess if it was the same person, the age was too different. However, there was a feeling from the beginning. Something to do with this woman with silver hair.

Hajime's fighting spirit burned. He would stop them, no

matter who the other party was. He'll kill anyone who gets in his way. He puts on a ferocious smile like that of a wild wolf.

"…. Hajime, nice." Yue responded to his look.

"Hajime… your face looks a little tight…"

"Thank you for showing me such a vicious look. You're making me wet!" Tio added.

The atmosphere between Hajime in the girls was anything but subtle, Liliana blushed at the sight.